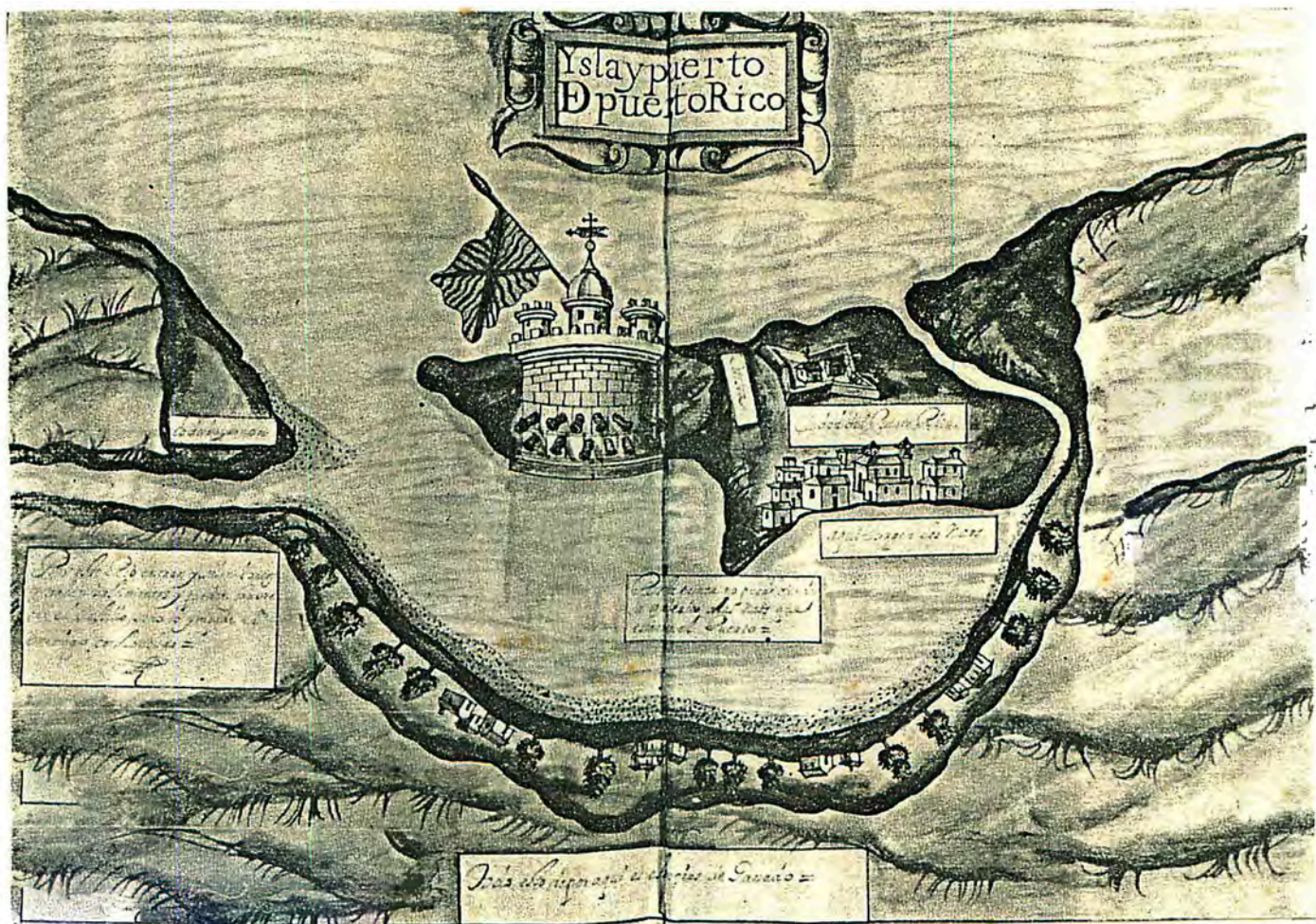




ARCHAEOLOGICAL, ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF THE FIRST SPANISH SETTLEMENT IN PUERTO RICO: CAPARRA

By Agamemnon Gus Pantel, Jalil Sued Badillo, Aníbal Sepúlveda and Beatriz del Cueto de Pantel

The Foundation of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Puerto Rico

1988 [Revised 2020]

This work is dedicated to don Adolfo de Hostos, Official Historian of Puerto Rico in the 1930's, for his pioneering work in archaeological research in Puerto Rico.

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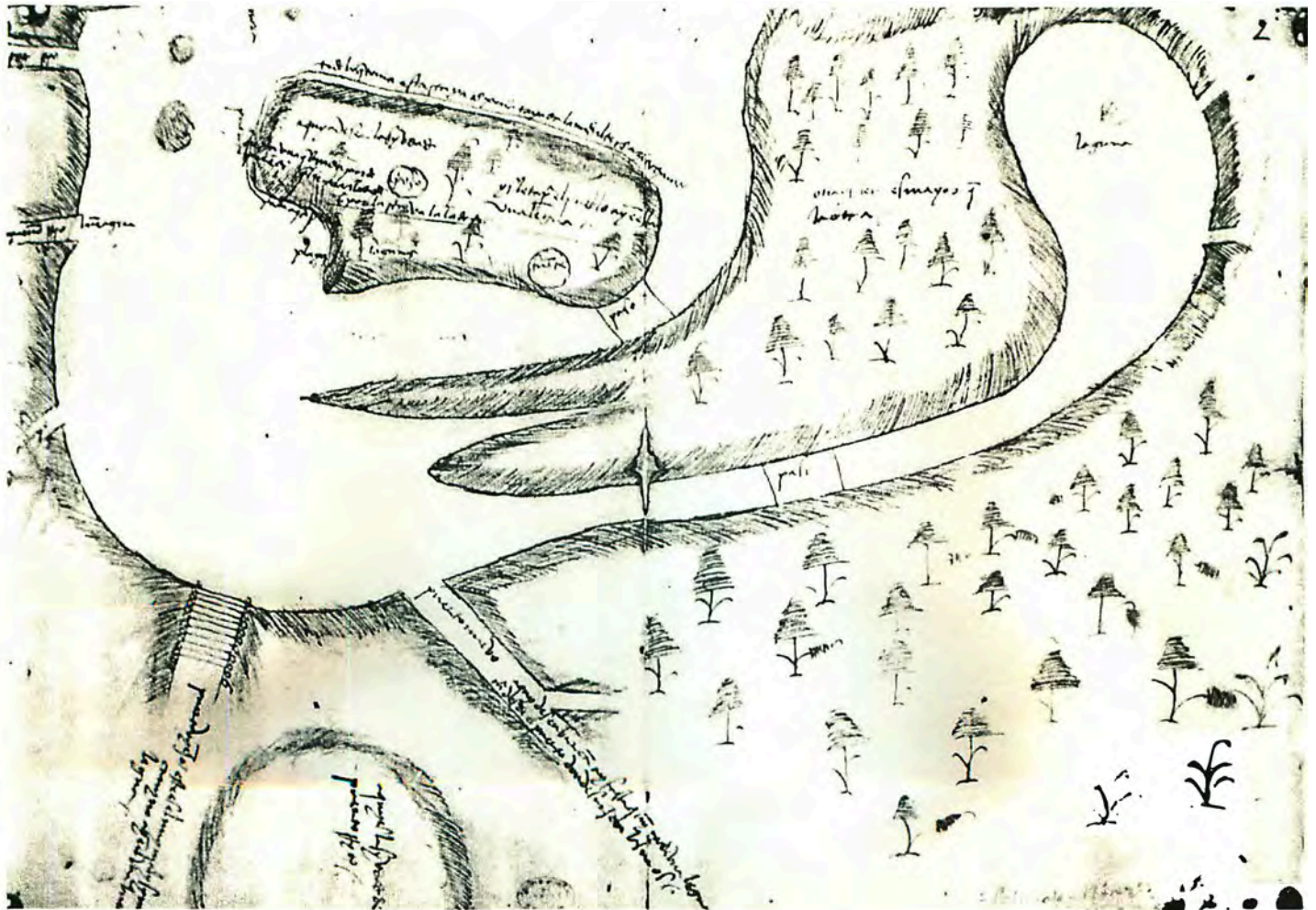
Cover: Ysla y Puerto de Puerto Rico. 1625. Bibliotheca Laurentiana. Florencia (Castro 1980)

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Caparra - The name Caparra was given by Commander Nicolas de Ovando to the port and bay near the settlement; the settlement of Caparra acquired the name by extension.

According to Vincente Murga (1971) Caparra was the name of a Roman village in the lands under the command of Ovando in the province of Caceres, Spain.



Plan of the Settlement and Harbor of "la Ciudad de Puerto Rico" (Caparra) in 1519 by Rodrigo de Figueroa. (*Archivo General de Indias* 1966)

INTRODUCTION

This research is the result of an effort by the *Fundación Arqueológica, Antropológica e Histórica de Puerto Rico*¹ to continue their investigations into the major periods of historical development of the cultural fabric of the island of Puerto Rico. One of these research goals has been focused on understanding the history of the initial population of the island by precolumbian groups. A second period of the Foundation's research focuses on the early colonial periods of the island, with particular interest to those of the early contact periods. Projects such as the *Paseo Muñoz Rivera* (1976), *Fort Buchanan* (1982), *Barrio Ballaja* (1986) and the *Cuartel Ballaja* (1987) have been developed by the Foundation as key research efforts. Caparra represents one of these early contact period sites that has a special importance to us all as we near the 500th year anniversary of the principal encounter between Europeans and the indigenous groups of the New World. This particular settlement represents one of the first European incursions into the indigenous territory of Puerto Rico and a point of encounter between two highly developed cultures.

The initial research program for Caparra involved archaeological excavation of numerous parts of the purported settlement with research augmented by architectural and ethnohistorical documentation. The first submission of the proposed project of excavation was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office of Puerto Rico for funding considerations under the Survey and Planning grant program of the Historic Preservation Fund of the U.S. National Park Service. Funding, however, for excavation of archaeological sites was not eligible so the project was redesigned to provide baseline fundamental data through a research program that remained within the administrative parameters of the National Park Service HPF monies. Under this program a 70% federal and 30% non-federal grant was awarded for the investigations of the National Register site of Caparra.

Although the original research design of the Foundation was considered the best approach to re-investigating the site of Caparra, the research was adapted to the requested format. The revised program required the elimination of an excavation program and allowed only limited archaeological testing. The testing program had to be redefined to fulfill National Register issues, primarily for the purposes of defining site boundaries and the present integrity of the Caparra ruins. The archaeological testing program incorporated a series of ethnohistorical and architectural investigations. A full copy of the original proposal is included in Appendix.

The final team effort was composed of numerous researchers covering the specific areas relating to Caparra. The following individuals working under the Foundation of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Puerto Rico contributed to this research effort:

Principal Investigator/Research Director
Agamemnon Gus Pantel, Ph.D.

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¹ The Foundation of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Puerto Rico, also referred to in this document as the Foundation.

Jose Agosto

Laboratory
Andres Principe
Aida Rodriguez

Although this volume represents the collective efforts of all the individuals, chapter contributions were written by the primary researchers as follows:

Agamemnon Gus Pantel wrote

Section A: Introduction, Section B: Background and Project Development, Section F: Field Investigations and Laboratory Results and Section G: Conclusions and Recommendations.

Jalil Sued Badillo wrote

Section C: The Founding of Caparra.

Anibal Sepulveda wrote

Section D: Caparra: The First European Urban Center in Puerto Rico.

Beatriz del Cueto de Pantel wrote

Section E: Villa Caparra: The Settlement That Time Forgot.

In addition to the researchers who participated in this project, acknowledgement must be given to the following individuals, institutions and agencies who were instrumental in the overall success of the present investigation: Lic. Wilfredo A. Geigel, President of the Board of Directors of the Foundation, supported and promoted the continuation of the Foundation's research into the early contact periods.

Sr. Roberto Rosario Rosario was extremely generous in providing the research team with a large amount of the historical documentation. As research for his pre-thesis for Architecture he gathered important information on general aspects of Caparra which he graciously provided us for use in this work. He also facilitated the research team with all of the original field notes and documentation of don Adolfo de Hostos, which he had given to Sr. Rosario. Although a collection of don Adolfo's personal library was donated by Sr. Rosario to the Library of the School of Architecture of the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, none of this documentation was used in the present research.

Dr. Osiris Delgado, as Director of *Monumentos Históricos* and Prof. Ada Anglada, Assistant Director of the *Area de Investigación y Estudio* at the *Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña*, provided the Foundation with authorization to carry out limited testing on the Institute property which houses the Ruins of Caparra.

Dra. Eda Burgos Malave, Director of the *Centro de Investigaciones* of the Institute, gave authorization to examine the archaeological deposits of the Institute for material pertaining to Caparra.

Dr. Ricardo Alegria, provided us with information on the Instituto's excavations of the Caparra site in the 1950's and their results.

Sr. Mariano Coronas Castro, the State Historic Preservation Officer, was responsible for approving National Park Service Survey and Planning project which provided part of the funds for the present research.

Sra. Maritza Ramirez, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, along with Mr. Jeff Walker, State Archaeologist, were instrumental in providing the administrative coordination necessary for the realization of this project.

Senator Velda Gonzalez de Modesti, President of the Standing Senate Committee on Culture and Sra. Cuca Saldaña provided the research team with access to properties and property owners in the lots adjacent to the Caparra ruins. Numerous residents

in the vicinity of the Caparra ruins allowed the research team to do testing on their property. These included the Fa. Deya, Fa. Mudafort, Sra. Eneida Alvarez, Fa. Rebello, Fa. Pons, and Fa. Luis Alicea.

Monseñor Rafael Fontanez who is Parish priest and administrator of the Iglesia San Jose and related properties across the street from the Caparra ruins, was instrumental in obtaining permission from Cardinal Aponte Martinez to allow limited testing within the property limits of the Catholic Church. We are very grateful for the cooperation given this project by Monseñor Fontanez and the Church.

The Director of the Villa Caparra Kindergarten, Sra. Lilia Escalona, was most gracious and generous in allowing us to do mechanical testing in their parking area as part of this research phase.

The firm of Jaca & Sierra Testing Labs provided the mechanical boring equipment and crew for the deep tests done in the roadways and within the area of the Villa Caparra Kindergarten.

Srta. Maricarmen Ramirez, Director of the University of Puerto Rico Museum, and Sra. Flavia Marichal, Registrar for the museum collections, were most helpful and gracious in allowing us permission to examine and photograph an original album of photos and notes of don Adolfo de Hostos from his Caparra excavations.

Sra. Gina Lavandero, Archivist and Curator of the Archives of Acquisitions and Properties of the Department of Transportation and Public Works, gave the research team a great deal of information and access to original cartographic data on the area surrounding Caparra. Permission to copy these plans were given by the Director, Lic. José R. Roman Borgos.

Sr. Carlos Fuentes, from the Plans Archives of the Department of Transportation and Public Works provided us with the 1942 Proposed Plan for the deviation of PR #2 in the area of the Caparra Ruins.

Srta. Magda Sardina, and Sr. Roberto Garcia, graduate architects, worked on the field measurements of the existing ruins and the graphic development of the maps for the project which show the superimposition of the original location of the Caparra ruins in relation to their present position.

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

General Background

It is important to emphasize early on in this project that much, if not all, of the research efforts to date regarding Caparra have focused primarily on the stronghold of Juan Ponce de León (Fig. 1-B). As will be seen in subsequent sections of this work, Caparra was a growing and developing settlement, and not just a single structure.

The settlement of Caparra was composed of numerous structures, plaza areas, and a great number of activity areas including at least twenty-nine residential units (*bohios*), a church, storage structures, a smelting house, blacksmith shop, water wells, stockyards, to enumerate but a few. If indeed the present ruins of Caparra represent the stronghold of Juan Ponce de León constructed in 1508, then evidence of these other activity areas are highly likely to have survived in the archaeological record.

Despite the urban development of the present area of Villa Caparra, the nature of the properties and structures surrounding the present day ruins still appear to hold potential for archaeological evidence (Fig. 2-B). As in the case of precolumbian sites dating hundreds and even thousands of years into the past, the permanence of "living floors", "activity areas", and other non-artifactual evidence is sufficient to anticipate the permanence of similar human activity traces in colonial sites dating only a few centuries into the past. As such, it is anticipated that the site of the ruins of the stronghold at Caparra should be surrounded by a wealth of archaeological evidence relevant to the establishment and survival of the settlement during the first years of European colonization in Puerto Rico.

CHRONOLOGY OF CAPARRA FROM 1508 TO 1988

- 1508 Caparra founded by Juan Ponce de León
- 1521 Caparra is abandoned, and the settlement moved to the Isleta of San Juan
- 1647 Diego de Torres Vargas makes written reference to ruins existing in Caparra
- 1884 and 1887 Cartographic documentation is produced in Puerto Rico showing the location of "Ermita de la Antigua Caparra" in the area of Pueblo Viejo
- 1899 A photograph in *Our Islands and Their People* is published by Wheeler showing "Ruins of Ponce de León's Fort"
- 1900 A photograph of the same structure is published by the *Departamento de la Guerra, Censo de Puerto Rico* for the 1899 census and is identified as *Ruinas de una Iglesia en Pueblo Viejo*
- 1908 400th anniversary of the founding of Caparra is celebrated in the area of Pueblo Viejo on the purported site of the original ruins
- 1915 Section of Highway PR#2 from Pueblo Viejo to Bayamon is constructed cutting in half the later discovered ruins of Juan Ponce de León's stronghold at Caparra
- 1923 A photograph of different ruins than those published in 1899 and 1900, are published in *El Libro de Puerto Rico* and identified as "Ruinas de Caparra. Iglesia de San Juan Bautista (1511). One of the Oldest Towns in America (1508)"
- 1936 Purported ruins of Ponce de León's original stronghold at Caparra believed discovered by Rivero Chaves; and an official committee, "*Comite de Acción de las Investigaciones de Caparra*", is formed by the Department of the Interior

- 1937 don Adolfo de Hostos excavates the site believed to contain the ruins of the Caparra stronghold of Juan Ponce de León
- 1948 4,980 square meters of land containing part of the Caparra stronghold ruins are purchased by the government for public protection and development of a commemorative park
- 1948 to 1951 Highway PR-#2 is expanded towards the north, destroying most of the remaining ruins discovered in 1936
- 1958 Property acquired by the government in 1948 is entrusted to the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture; don Ricardo Alegria carries out excavations of property; ruins are consolidated; and a museum is constructed on the lot
- 1963 Highway PR-#2 is expanded towards the south, destroying even more of the ruins which had been discovered in 1936
- 1984 The Institute property containing the Caparra ruins and part of highway #2 are nominated to the National Register of Historic Places
- 1987 The Foundation of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Puerto Rico carries out archaeological and historical investigations on the reconstructed ruins of Juan Ponce de León's stronghold and investigations on the areas believed to constitute the early 16th century settlement of Caparra

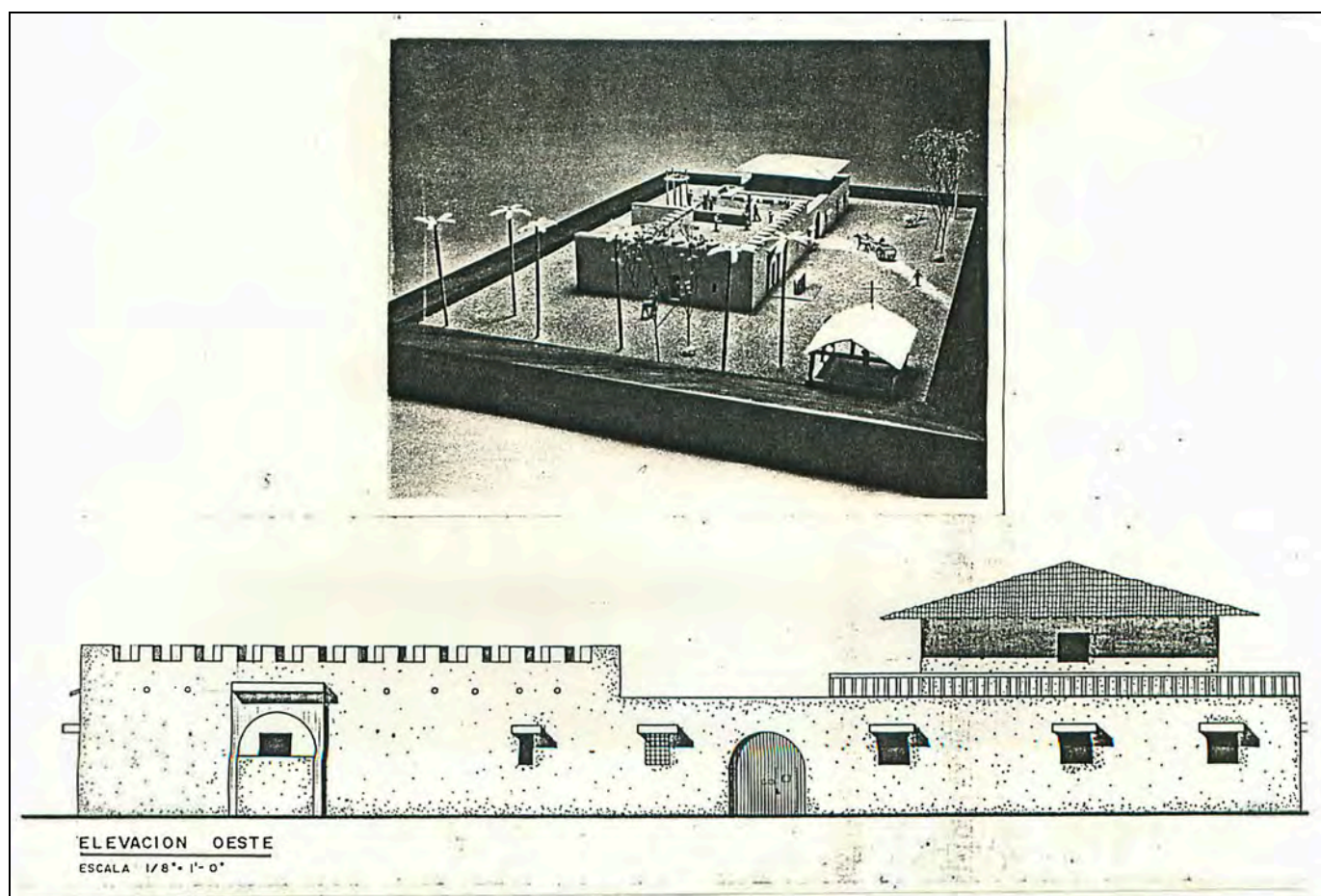


Figure 1-B. Research efforts regarding Caparra have focused on the stronghold of Ponce de León. (Rosario 1984)

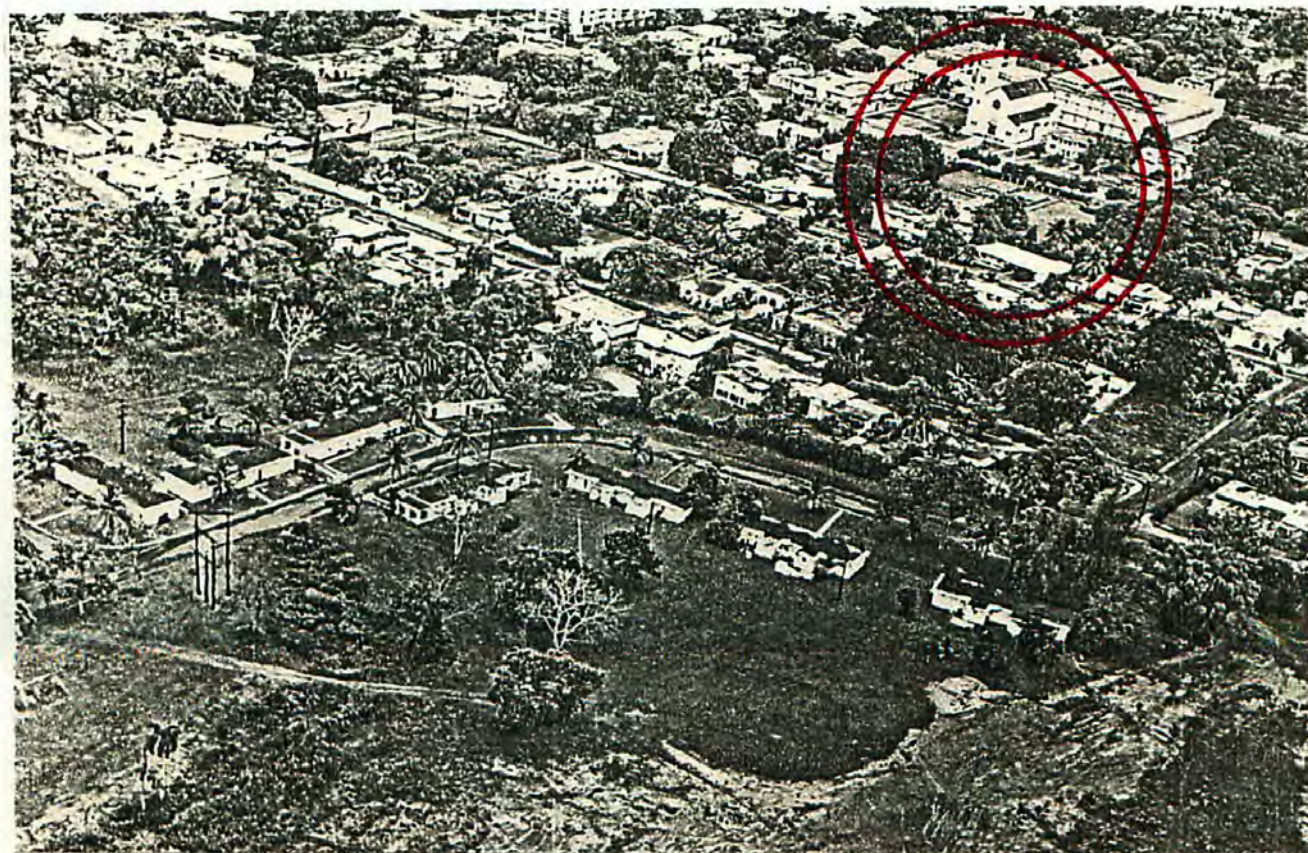


Figure 2-B. Urban development surrounding present day ruins. (Pantel 1979)



Juan Ponce de León, first governor of Puerto Rico and Founder of Caparra.

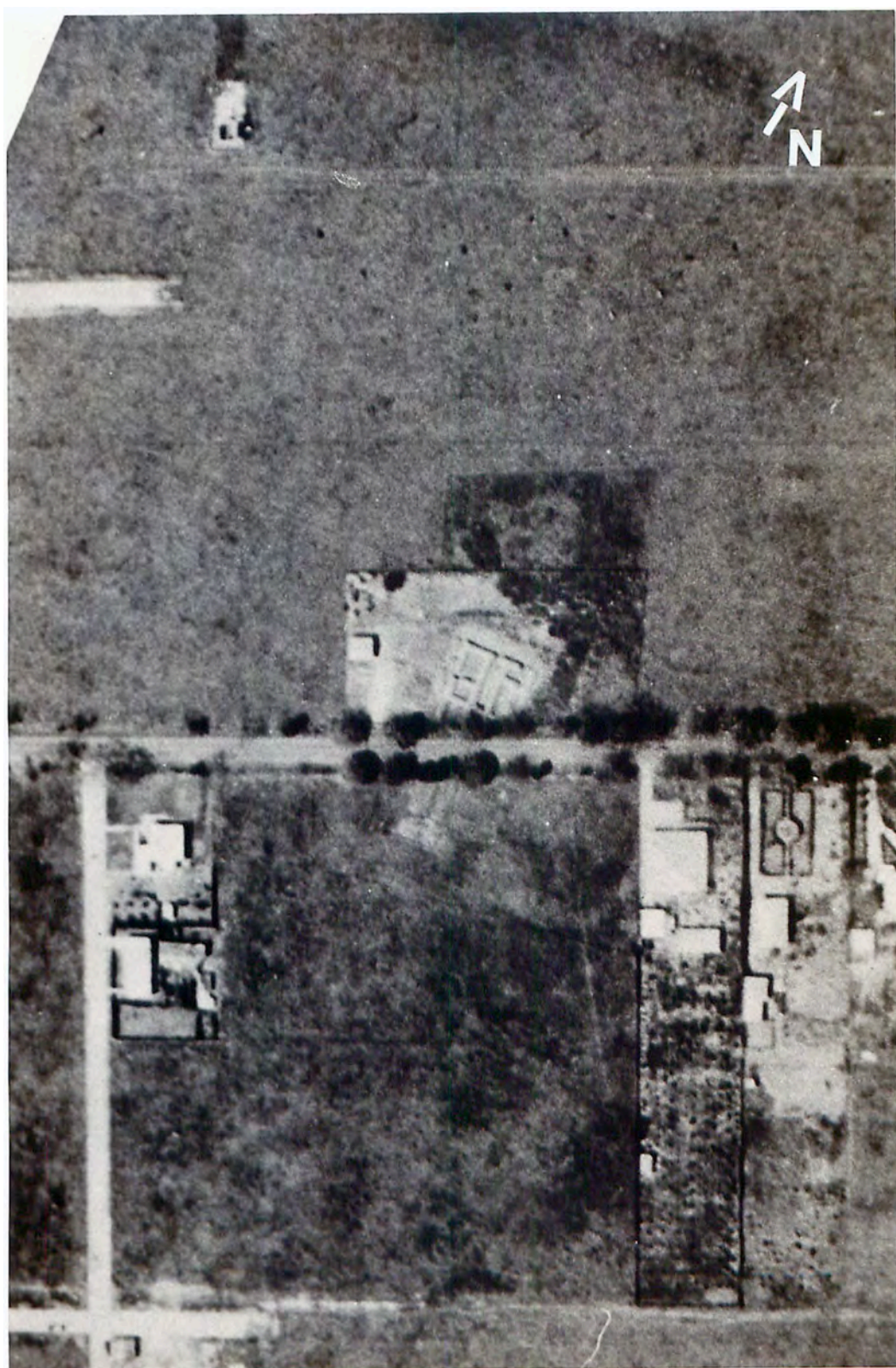


Fig. 3-B. Ruins excavated under the direction of don Adolfo de Hostos in 1937. (Aerial photograph ca. 1938, Archives of the Natural Resources Department)

The 1937 Investigations

The first scientific investigation which was oriented towards determining the location of the settlement of Caparra was that of don Adolfo de Hostos (Fig. 3-B). At the time, de Hostos was the "Official Historian of Puerto Rico". As will be seen in subsequent sections, the events leading up to the 1937 excavations of de Hostos and the subsequent handling of the ruins were heavily laden with controversy.

It needs to be stated, and we must recognize, that the excavations which de Hostos carried out were well-planned and followed rigid scientific standards. His use of a controlled grid system (Fig. 4-B) for the excavation of the ruins permitted clear site definition and proper associative contexts for the artifactual materials excavated from the site. The major part of the excavated material, if not all, was sifted through wire mesh to insure the proper recuperation of artifactual material. De Hostos' field notes are detailed and exhaustive. His methodological approach to the excavation and analysis of the field results are commendable and were extremely thorough.



Fig. 4-B. Enlargement of map description. (de Hostos' personal files)

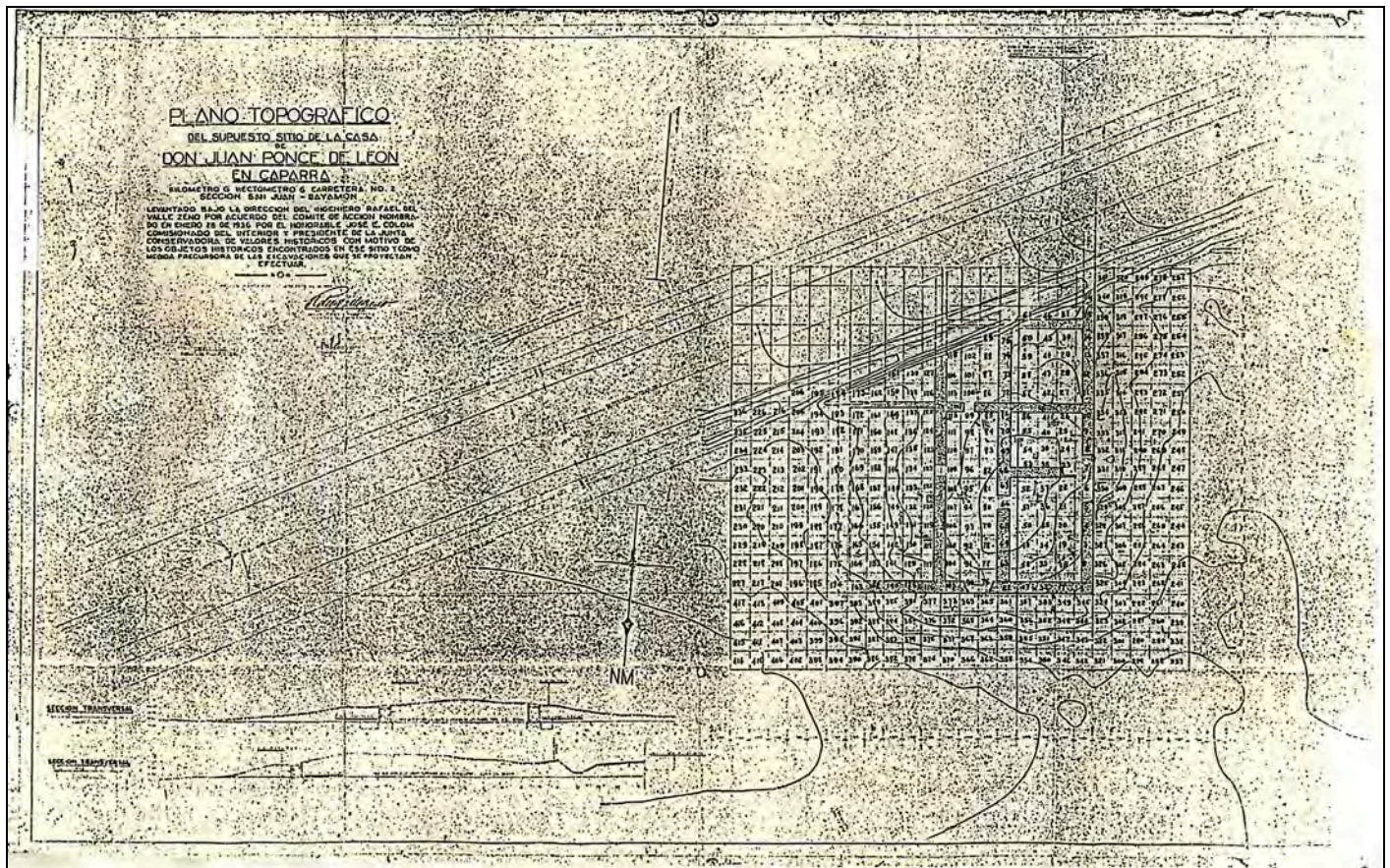


Fig. 4-B (2). Reduced copy of Topographic Plan of area of ruins with archeological grid. (de Hostos' personal files)

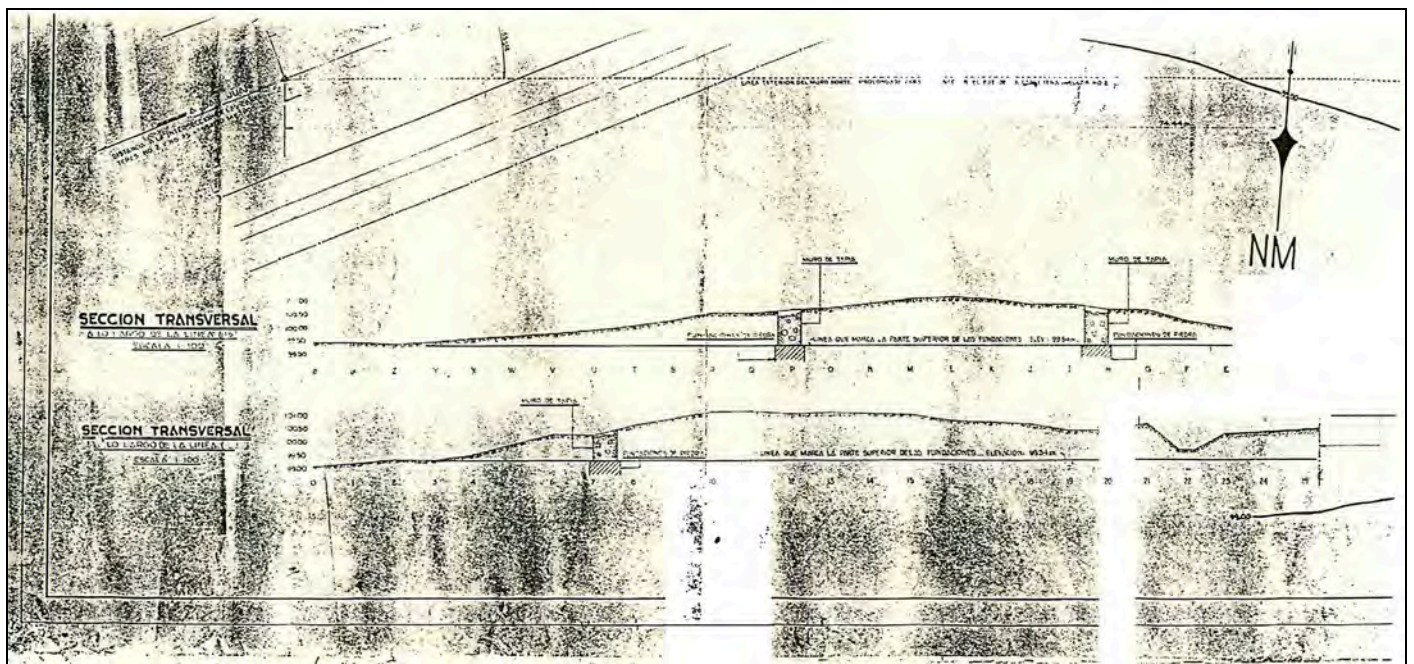


Fig 4-B (3). Site sections showing *tapia* walls. (de Hostos' personal files)

In 1936, this group, led by señor Rivero Chaves discovered a mound which contained the remnants of a massive walled structure (Fig. 6-B). As related by Rivero Chaves the actual discovery of the site was as follows:

Por el camino me llamó la atención una elevación del terreno semejante a un pequeño montículo cubierto de pasto . . . y metiendome por entre los alambres de la cerca me puse a buscar por todo aquel sitio hasta ver algo así como una piedra que sobresalía de la superficie del terreno como dos o tres pulgadas. Con un pedazo de madera empecé a escarbar alrededor de dicha piedra y a poco comprobé que no era piedra sino un pedazo de material parecido al que antiguamente se usaba para construir. . . les mostré lo que acababa de descubrir y ellos estuvieron conformes conmigo en que bajo aquel montículo de tierra podía haber algo de lo que ellos y yo buscábamos (de Hostos 1938:6-7).



Fig. 6-B. Newspaper article informing of the recent archaeological find. (de Hostos' personal files)

The mound was initially excavated by non-professionals in an attempt to determine its nature. The front exterior part of a wall and associated Spanish colonial material was discovered (Fig. 7-B) before the decision was made to halt further incursions into the mound. It was decided that a professional was needed to excavate and properly assess this potentially significant find. It was at this juncture that the Department of the Interior calls a meeting of the "Junta Conservadora de Valores Históricos" and forms the "Comite de Acción de las Investigaciones de Caparra" (Fig.8-B).The Committee is composed of five individuals: Rvdo.

Padre M. Vasallo, Dr. Montalvo Guenard, Prof. Rafael W. Ramirez, Don Adolfo de Hostos, and Ing. Rafael del Valle Zeno. Since Adolfo de Hostos was the Official Historian of Puerto Rico at the time, he was elected president of the Committee and charged with conducting the excavations at the site discovered by Rivero Chaves (Fig. 9-B).

De Hostos takes to heart his task at hand and, as he so aptly details in his 1938 publication, goes about preparing background information on Caparra prior to his actual fieldwork. His field methodology is based on the works of Flinders Petrie, who, at the time, was considered by many as the father of modern archaeological field methods. Following Petrie, de Hostos meticulously details the Caparra fieldwork and results.



Fig. 7-B. Mound discovered by Rivero Chaves in 1936 in the Ojea Farm. (de Hostos' personal files)

REUNION DE LA JUNTA CONSERVADORA DE VALORES HISTORICOS

Se nombró un comité de acción en relación con las ruinas de Caparra

El Departamento del Interior sostuvo la siguiente reunión: El Comisionado del Interior, en la tarde del martes pasado se celebró en la Oficina del Comisionado del Interior, señor Colom y bajo la presidencia de éste, una reunión de la Junta Conservadora de Valores Históricos a la que concurrieron, como miembros de ella, los siguientes señores: señor Isabel Alonso de Mier, doctor Jorge del Toro, señor Rafael Carmoega, coronel Uhl, representante del coronel Cole, señor Adolfo de Hostos, señor Rafael W. Ramírez, señor Mario Brav, señor Jesús Benítez CAMAÑO.

Además, por invitación especial del Presidente, asistieron los señores: doctor J. L. Montalvo Guenard, Reverendo Padre Vasallo, Aquilino Riquero Chaves, subcomisionado de General Pedro A. de Castro, doctor Rulf Selzer, Atalaya Castro, secretario del Comisionado, y los subcomisionados Enrique Ortega y Rafael del Valle Zeno.

El presidente señor Colom después de saludar a los concurrentes y mostrar su satisfacción por la asistencia y activa participación, explicó que con motivo de haberse encontrado ciertos de valor histórico en las excavaciones practicadas en el supuesto sitio de Caparra había creído conveniente suspender esas excavaciones y reunir la Junta de Valores Históricos a fin de tomar las medidas necesarias para continuarlas bajo un plan determinado y dirigidas por personas competentes para obtener el mayor partido posible de estas investigaciones.

Como el subcomisionado de Comercio, señor Riquero Chaves había coincidido originalmente con el Comisionado sobre la conveniencia de esta medida y lo había tocado dar los últimos pasos en la obtención de estos informes, el Presidente le pasó en el uso de la palabra para que explicara a la concurrencia los detalles del sitio y los objetos encontrados.

El señor Riquero Chaves hizo una exposición sobre la importancia del sitio de Caparra.

Después de algunos de los objetos encontrados, tales como azulejos, trozos de tejas, clavos, etc., y de documentos históricos, libros de texto, planos, etc., el comisionado Colom invitó a los presentes a emitir opiniones avanzadas sobre las posibilidades de que en el sitio objeto de las excavaciones pudiera haber algo que hubiera la casa de don Juan Ponce de León en la fundación de Caparra.

El profesor de Historia de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, señor Rafael W. Benítez, hizo una exposición de hechos históricos preliminares de que con esos antecedentes fué fundada por don Juan Ponce de León la ciudad de Caparra y se refirió a unas antiguas ruinas que desde hace muchos años son conocidas y vistas en el antiguo camino verbal de Guayama en donde en 1928, con motivo del Centenario de don Juan Ponce de León, se celebró una fiesta conmemorativa.

Levó la descripción que de su casa hizo el Conquistador a Ovando, cuyas palabras textuales son: "Fue una casa mediana, con su terrado, o pechil, almenas, o su ladera. Celoso de la patria, o toda encubierta de dentro e de fuera, de albor de siete torres en albor con el pechil e almenas".

Se extendió en otras anotaciones históricas.

El ingeniero Rafael del Valle Zeno hizo notar con datos y planos preliminares, que el sitio en donde han aparecido algunos muros de "tapia", "azulejos", etc., se encuentra en lo que es hoy carretera a Bayamón construida en 1917 y en donde no había camino verbal alguno y a 400 metros distantes de las antiguas ruinas conocidas indicando que la posibilidad de que se esté delante de un nuevo hallazgo his

torico. Habla de las construcciones de "tapia" y se refirió a los azulejos encontrados en las excavaciones indicando su origen español del siglo quince y describiendo el proceso ya conocido en esta época de esmaltes "bisecados" a base de óxido de estaño, como una muestra del antiguo

almo esmalte "bisecado" a base de óxido de plomo.

El arquitecto Pedro A. de Castro asintió en estas manifestaciones y dijo que semejantes piezas de cerámica habrían aparecido en Santo Domingo.

La señora Isabel Alonso de Mier dijo que ella tiene un "azulejo" de esa época encontrado en Santo Domingo y tuvo la amabilidad de ponerlo a la disposición de la Junta.

El historiador de Pto. Rico, don Adolfo de Hostos, coincidió en las ideas expresadas por los que habían precedido en el uso de la palabra y se extendió en anotaciones históricas intercalando apuntando el caso de una expedición ordenada por don Juan Ponce de León a la Isla de San Esteban en donde existen "puzolanas" o cemento natural, corroborando así la sospecha apuntada por el señor Del Valle Zeno de que en la construcción del muelle con sus diez arcos pegados estos azulejos por su dureza entra en la "puzolana" traída de la Isla de San Esteban.

El doctor Montalvo Guenard, arqueólogo e historiador, hizo una hermosa disertación documentada en tiempo de estas cuestiones históricas aportando mucha luz en estas investigaciones.

Mostró un plano fabricado por él con yeso del que había hecho formar parte un trozo de la valla encontrada en estas excavaciones para dar idea de lo que había sido este utensilio originalmente.

Presentó varios objetos encontrados en otros sitios en la isla apuntando la posibilidad de que se mezclaran a ellos podrían aparecer otros en las excavaciones que se proyectan.

El doctor Jorge del Toro, propuso (continúa en la 17, Col. 8)

Fig. 8-B. Newspaper article published in El Mundo on January 31, 1936. (de Hostos' personal files)

Mañana empezarán las excavaciones en Caparra

Donde se cree estuvo ubicada la casa de Juan Ponce de León

El Comisionado del Interior ha dado ya las instrucciones para que se proceda el lunes próximo a practicar las necesarias excavaciones de exploración en el sitio conocido por Caparra, en donde se sospecha que estuvo ubicada la Casa del Conquistador Don Juan Ponce de León.

La ley aprobada que autoriza al Comisionado a practicar estos trabajos, dispone que si las indagaciones conducen a un resultado positivo, como se espera, se adquirirá por compra al dueño de la finca y a favor de El Pueblo de Puerto Rico la parcela de terreno que sea necesaria para abarcar las ruinas allí encontradas y establecer en el futuro en ese sitio un parque y monumento conmemorativo como embellecimiento de San Juan y estímulo al turismo.

Se procederá en seguida a cercar provisionalmente la parcela y construir un pequeño almacén temporal para clasificación y resguardo de los objetos encontrados antes de iniciar las excavaciones. Estas se llevarán a cabo bajo la inmediata supervisión del Historiador de Puerto Rico, don Adolfo de Hostos, y del Sub-Comisionado del Interior don Rafael del Valle Zeno, quienes forman parte del Comité de Acción nombrado por el Comisionado para estas exploraciones.

Los demás miembros de este Comité que también están muy interesados en este asunto, señores Rafael W. Ramírez, doctor Montalvo Guenard y Rev. Padre Vasallo, estarán constantemente informados del progreso de los trabajos y su presencia en el sitio será solicitada en el curso de las exploraciones.

Un número muy reducido de peones dirigidos por un ingeniero del Departamento practicará las excavaciones con todas las precauciones necesarias.

Existe un gran interés en estos trabajos que habrán de poner en claro la verdad histórica por tanto tiempo sospechada.

Fig. 9-B. (de Hostos' personal files)

The 1937 excavations consisted of the following:

- 417 one-half meter square units covering the entire mound (Fig. 4-8)
- excavation by 4" and 6" artificial levels
- topographic and photographic documentation of all phases of excavation
- screening of all excavated material
- 129 four-inch borings at 1.5 meter intervals in the floor of each room and partition of the building and its surroundings in a three-meter corridor
- opening the foundations and exposure of the base of the walls
- transverse trenches and borings along the deposit located in front of the door

The 1937 excavations covered both sides of Highway #2 (Fig. 10-B). The mound which was originally discovered by Rivero Chaves was located on the north side of the highway and was the part of the structure which had been constructed of *tapia* (Fig. 11-B). The other part of the ruins which lay to the south of highway PR -#2 were constructed of stone (Fig. 12-B). In de Hosto's analysis of the two parts of the site (i.e. north and south of highway PR-#2)(Fig.13-B) his analysis of site development corresponds to an historical interpretation in that he uses the actual textual descriptions written by Juan Ponce de León. Nevertheless, his statistical data and logical correlations of artifact size and type of material being directly related to primary construction materials is very impressive (de Hostos 1938:108-113). Since the part of the house constructed of stone had more substantive building materials, when the settlement was abandoned, he concludes that the construction materials were probably taken away to be reused in the new settlement. As a result of this, the amount of cultural deposition for the southern part of the site is very low. The northern side of the site, which purportedly contained the *tapia* constructions, was composed of few reusable building materials. Hence, the extensive amount of "in situ" cultural refuse resulting from the eventual deterioration of the abandoned ruins (Figs. 14-B and 15-B).

The results of the 1937 excavations structural and artifactual evidence included both structural and artifactual evidence (Fig.16-B). In addition to *tapia* construction and stone construction a series of datable cultural artifacts were associated with the ruins:

- 607 whole bricks [pg.52]
- 16 intact tiles and 14 fragments [pg.54]
- hundreds of roof tiles (only one wholly intact) [pg.70]
- a large variety of ceramic vessels including plates, ceramic "glasses" (*vasos*), pharmacy bottles, ceramic "tubs" (*lebrillos*), a chamber pot, jars, and ceramic drain pipes (*atanor*) [pp. 79-85]
- 16 Spanish copper coins [pg.86] glass objects (one small intact bottle/a hundred or so amorphous fragments) [pp.90-91]
- 1,702 nails [pp.91-93]
- horseshoes and cart fragments (unspecified counts) [pp.93-94]
- ornamental [pp.96-98] metalwork (Fig. 17-B)

In conclusion, de Hostos lists the reasons why he believes that the ruins which he has excavated were those of Juan Ponce de León's stronghold built in the early part of the 16th century in Caparra (Figs. 18-B and 19-B). His archaeological analysis of the material remains at the site demonstrate unity of time, space and cultural affiliation (de Hostos 1938:99). As for his overall assessment of the historical affiliation of the ruins at the site, he utilizes both historical documentation and archaeological data to conclude that the ruins are those of the stronghold of Juan Ponce de León. The limited time frame of the production of the specific tiles found at the site (Fig. 20-B), coinage, ceramics and structural features of the ruins themselves (Fig. 21-B) present strong justification for his conclusions.



Fig. 10-B. Excavations on both sides of highway #2. On foreground is the stone house (south) and across the road, the covered remains of the *tapia* walls can be seen.



No. 22. La crujía D; gran sala probablemente destinada a uso público.



No. 24. Terminando la excavación de la crujía D.

Fig. 11-B. Ruins under the mound of *tapia* construction (north). (de Hostos 1938)



Fig. 12-B. Ruins of "stone" construction on the south side of the road. (de Hostos 1938)



Fig. 14-B. Panoramic view of the excavations. Nov 15, 1937. (de Hostos' personal files)



Fig. 14-B. Excavated earth after passing through the sieves. Ide Hostos; personal files)



Fig. 15-B. Archaeological excavations in full progress. (de Hostos 1938)



Fig. 16-B. View of archaeological work during 1937. (de Hostos 1938)

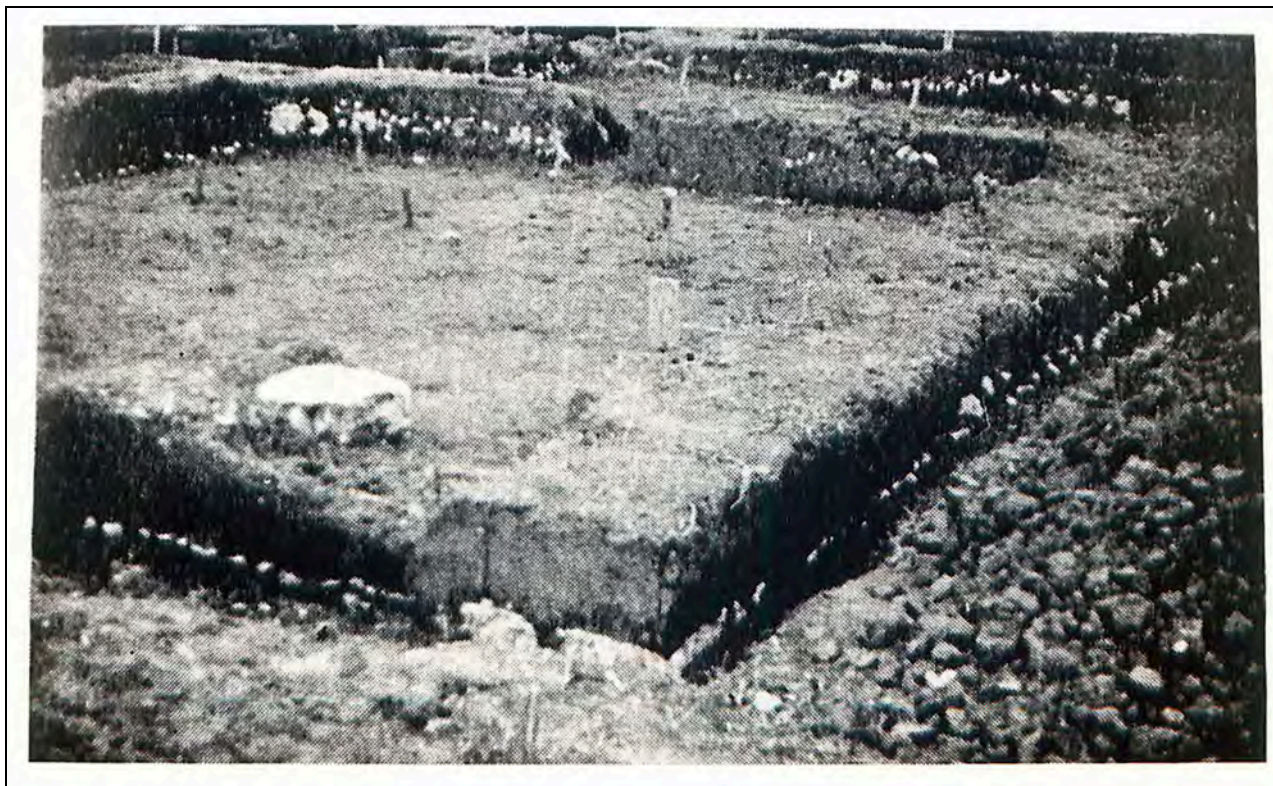


Fig. 16-B (2). View of archaeological work during 1937. (de Hostos 1938)



Fig. 16-B. (de Hostos 1938)

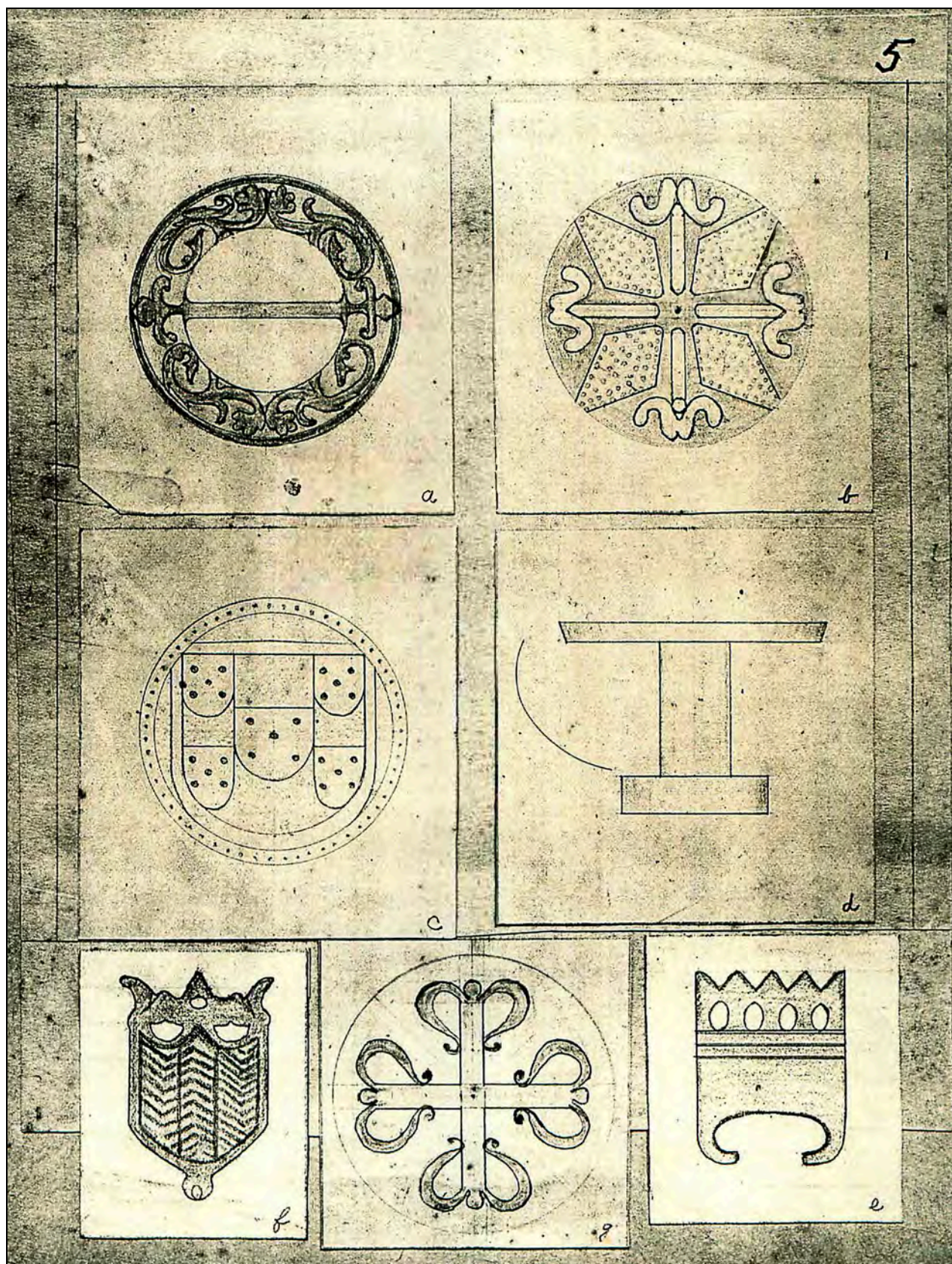


Fig. 17-B. De Hostos' drawings of various artifacts found at the Caparra site. (de Hostos; personal files)

LA FORTALEZA
PUERTO RICO

San Juan, February 25, 1938

Mr. Adolfo de Hostos
Historian of Puerto Rico
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Dear Mr. de Hostos:

Reference is made to Joint Resolution No. 33, approved May 10, 1937, "To make the necessary investigations for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not the ruins and objects recently found in the vicinity of kilometer 6, hectometer 6, of road No. 2, San Juan - Bayamón Section, belong to the ancient house that the Conquistador, Don Juan Ponce de León founded in Caparra in 1508", etc.

Since the Commissioner of the Interior, as Chairman of the Board for the Preservation of Historic Treasures of Puerto Rico, appointed a committee to take action in regard to making the requisite investigations, and you were selected as Chairman of this committee, I should be glad to have you submit to me a copy of the report of your committee to the Commissioner of the Interior, accompanied by such observations and recommendations, as may be pertinent thereto.

Sincerely yours,

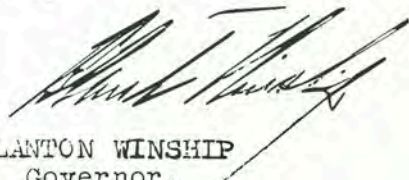

BLANTON WINSHIP
Governor.

Fig. 18-B. Governor Winship requests copy of final decision on excavated ruins from de Hostos. (de Hostos' personal files)

Condado, Santurce, P. R.
12 de marzo de 1938.

Hon. José E. Colón
Comandante del Interior
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Señor:-

Pláceme comunicar a Ud. que en una reunión celebrada en ésta fecha por el Comité de Acción de las Investigaciones de Caparra, me fué a mí confiada la misión de informar a Ud. acerca del dictamen final de ~~dicho comité~~ con respecto al resultado de las investigaciones encaminadas a identificar las ruinas del sitio de Caparra.

Para evitar repeticiones innecesarias me permito referirme a mi carta dirigida a Ud. en esta misma fecha, sobre el mismo asunto y de la cual incluyo una copia, informando a Ud. que el mencionado Comité ha manifestado su adhesión unánime a las conclusiones expresadas en dicha carta con excepción del apartado b, número 2, acerca de la cual no existe unanimidad de criterio.

De usted,

Muy atentamente,

ADOLFO DE HOSTOS
Historiador Oficial de Puerto Rico
Presidente, Comité de Acción de
las Investigaciones de Caparra.

ADH:hms

Incl. 1

Fig. 19-B. Correspondence stating reasons for the determination made that the ruins excavated were those of Ponce de León's stronghold at Caparra. (de Hostos' personal files)

San Juan, P. R.

14 de marzo de 1938

Honorable JOSÉ E. GOLON
Comisionado del Interior
SAN JUAN, P. R.

S e ñ a l :

Los abajo firmantes, miembros de la Comisión designada por Ud. para investigar las ruinas encontradas en el kilómetro 6, hectómetro 6 de la Carretera No. 2 de San Juan á Bayamón y dictaminar sobre si las mismas corresponden á las de la casa que en 1509 ó poco después construyera en Caparra el Conquistador Don Juan Ponce de León, nos complacemos en informarle lo siguiente:

Después de practicadas las excavaciones, que se iniciaron en noviembre 10 de 1937, examinado cuidadosamente el material procedente de las mismas y estudiados los aspectos arquitectónico, arqueológico é histórico nos reunimos el día 12 de marzo de 1938 en la Biblioteca Carnegie en donde por unanimidad de votos de los cinco miembros que componen este Comité fué acuerdo dictaminar que las ruinas examinadas corresponden á las de la casa construida en Caparra por el Conquistador Don Juan Ponce de León.

Y para los fines que correspondan, firmamos la presente hoy día 14 de marzo de 1938.

Atentamente

Adolfo de Hostos
Presidente

R. W. Ramirez
Secretario

Dr. J. L. Montalvo Guenard
Vocal

Rev. R. Vassallo
Vocal

Rafael del Valle Zeno
Vocal

Fig. 19-B (2). Correspondence stating reasons for the determination made that the ruins excavated were those of Ponce de León's stronghold at Caparra. (de Hostos' personal files)



Fig. 20-B. Graphic and historic study of decorative tiles ("azulejos") found at Caparra. (de Hostos' personal files)



Fig. 21-B. Particular structural features of the ruins at Caparra. (de Hostos' personal files)

The Instituto's Work on Caparra

During the late 1950's the property acquired by the government of Puerto Rico (Fig.22-B) is given to the *Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* for custodianship of the Caparra ruins and the surrounding lot.

In 1958 don Ricardo Alegría, then Executive Director of the Institute, carried out excavations in the property containing the Caparra ruins. A limited amount of associative artifactual material was recovered in the excavations, however the presence of a brick floor was found (Alegría 1988, personal communication).

It was during this period that the collections of the 1937 excavations were transferred from their housing at a museum of the Department of Agriculture located in Muñoz Rivera Park, to the Museum of the University of Puerto Rico. With the formation of the Institute and the granting of the curation of the ruins to them, the University of Puerto Rico transferred the major portion of the collections to this institution for the development of a museum on the Caparra property. Part of these collections were then placed on exhibit in the newly built museum at Caparra, part of them remained in the Institute and part of the collections were kept by the University Museum (ibid).

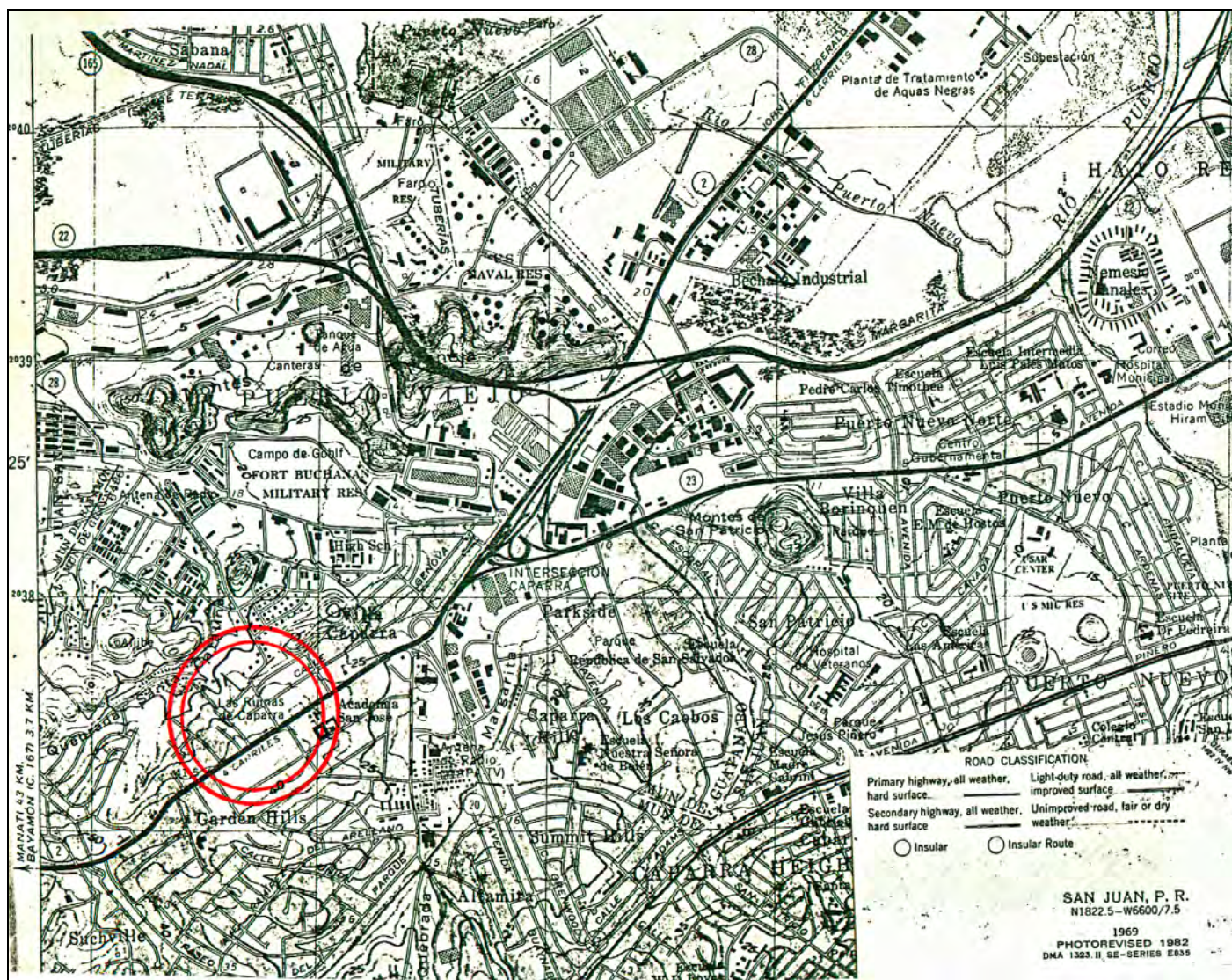


Fig. 23-B. U.S.G.S. of area.

Research Issues of the 1987 Foundation Investigations of Caparra

The proposed 1987 research program of the Foundation promoted the development of new investigations of the first Spanish settlement in Puerto Rico. The Foundation, realizing the importance of the site of Caparra in regards to the upcoming 500th Anniversary of the Discovery, carried out a coordinated basic research program. The interest of the Foundation was also developed as a result of its close association and respect for don Adolfo de Hostos.

The lack of data on the settlement of Caparra was a main impetus for the Foundation's present research effort. The total eradication of any evidence of the settlement of Caparra other than the house of Juan Ponce de León is not likely, given the types of activities which occurred there for over a decade. Also, given the permanence of the Caparra ruins for over four centuries, it is highly likely that other significant features of the settlement have survived. Although the stronghouse of Ponce de León is historically considered the most substantive element of the settlement (Fig. 24-8), it is hard to imagine that there were not other structures and artifacts which remained once the settlement was abandoned. The accounts of Diego de Torres Vargas in 1647 uses the plural when he mentions the ruins of *algunas casas* (i.e. several stonehouses), not that of a (singular) stone house, remaining at the abandoned site of Caparra. This evidence leads one to suspect that the settlement was more than that

which is popularly conceived of a single permanent structure with sparse development will be elaborated in the subsequent chapters.

The use of a multi-disciplinary team approach to the problem of trying to physically further define the parameters of the settlement of Caparra was considered essential. The focus of the research was to provide a new overview of the settlement of Caparra from both an archival, and archaeological field testing approach. The research was oriented towards providing a re-assessment of base-line data on the history of the 16th century settlement.

From a methodological point of view, very fundamental research issues were approached in this work:

1. determination of the integrity of the present ruins in relation to their location and construction; and
2. field investigation and testing to corroborate archival and cartographic data related to the Caparra settlement

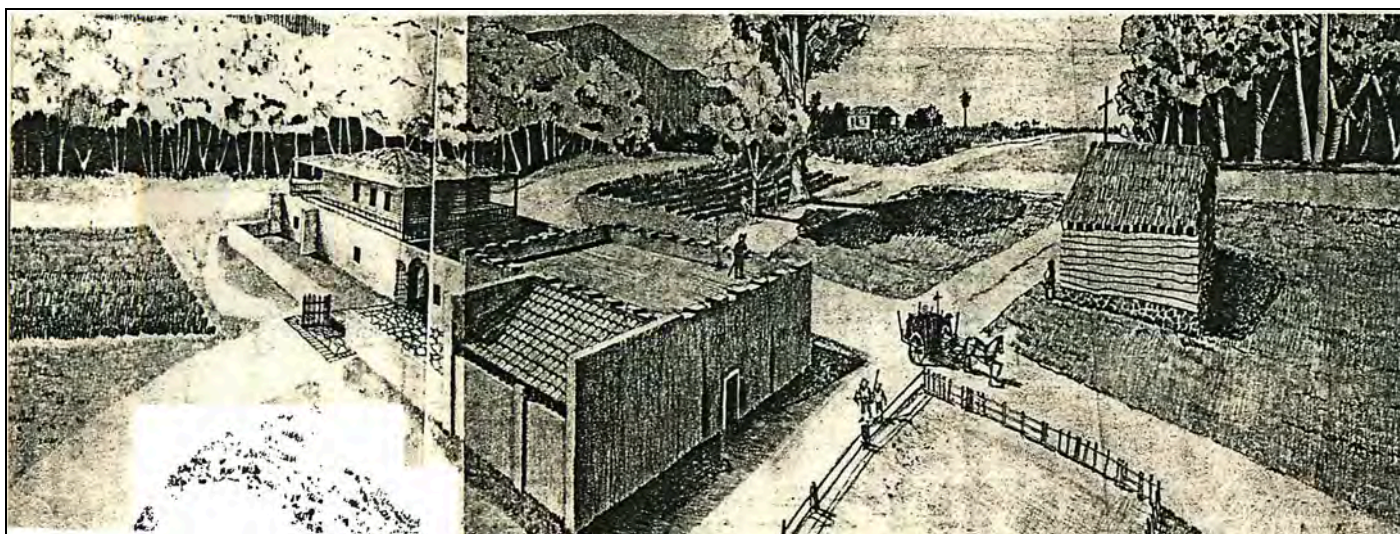


Fig. 24-B. Artistic investigation of Ponce de León's stronghold. (Rosario 1984)

SECTION C: THE FOUNDING OF CAPARRA



(Alexander 1976)

THE FOUNDING OF CAPARRA

History

The study of Caparra (also named "Ciudad de Puerto Rico"), first Spanish settlement in the Taino island of Borinquen, is in many aspects, the study of the colonizing process of the island (Fig. 1-C). Its importance lay in its function as the main governmental, commercial and mining center of the whole colony. As such, its daily life was far from a microcosm of island activities. Its existence was short but intense; it lasted for only thirteen years.

In 1506, Juan Ponce de León, then City Councilor in the Province of Higüey and prominent entrepreneur, attracted by reports of gold, obtained permission from Nicolas de Ovando, first Governor of the Indies, to unofficially touch on the island of Borinquen and report of its resources (Tió 1961). Ponce landed on the western coast, having followed a straight course from Higüey, coming into the domains of Chief Maboabantes near the mouth of the Guaorao River, today the Añasco River (Fig. 2-C). His expedition soon moved northward following news of the existence of a large bay capable of holding a fleet. Along the northern coastal plains, the party discovered numerous and rich placer deposits flowing down from tributaries into the Mavilla, Cibuco, Guayanes and Toa rivers. The main placer mining region of the island had been found!

Ponce's party came as far as the San Juan Bay during that first intrusion in Borinquen. It is difficult to ascertain if he then visited the savanna region where Caparra was to be later founded. Most probably he did not, because after his return two years later, he tried to establish his permanent camp nearer to the coast and closer to the Corozal district, but the absence of suitable port facilities always made him return to the proximity of San Juan Bay. Thus, the Caparra area was chosen as a forced alternative. His instructions, drafted by Ovando during the middle of 1508 were short and simple; he was to explore and confirm the location of the gold deposits, win the confidence and support of the Indians, establish a mining camp which could shelter and defend the party of fifty men he was to recruit, and he was to initiate the recovery of gold. There was no mention of colonization yet. The first structures to be erected were two "houses"(Fig. 3-C),one for defense purposes which he described thus:

Hice hacer una casa mediana, con su terrado e pretil y almenas, y su barrera delante de la puerta y toda encalada de dentro y de fuera, de altor de siete tapias en alto con el pretil y almenas [Murga 1957, II:521] (Fig. 4-C)

which was to be an improvised medium size wooden fort with possibly the beginnings of another more permanent one (Murga 1957, II:526). A few months later, Ponce returned to Santo Domingo to negotiate an agreement with the Crown, which was to be known as the "Company", still with no clauses dealing with the peopling of the Island. Thus, the first character of the Caparra emplacement was nothing but a mining camp of no more than fifty odd miners. Ponce himself opposed the idea of opening the island to colonizers arguing a lack of foodstuffs (ibid). The Crown, however, was apparently in urgent need to secure the island from the claims of Columbus' son, Diego, and negotiated with other parties for the settlement and colonization of other parts of the Island. Since January 1509, prior to the second contract with Ponce, the Crown gave license to Cristobal de Sotomayor for the settlement in the southern coast of an alternative village which received the names of *Guanica* and *Villa de Tavera*. Another agreement was in process with Pedro Suarez de Castilla, a Sevillian nobleman, with colonizing perspectives (Murga 1961, I : 9). The Crown's plans were clearly stated in a letter to the *Casa de Contratación* in Seville dated the 29th of January 1509:

Y lo que yo quiero que se haga luego en la dicha isla de San Juan es una buena fortaleza en el mejor lugar que se pueda, para sojuzgar toda la isla y dos poblaciones en los mejores lugares que pareciere para este efecto y para el servicio de las minas Si se pudiere no pondreis de mi dinero en lo susodicho (Murga 1961, I:9).

Ponce's desire to keep the Island closed to colonizers was thus undermined, and he himself received a few months later, thirty royal permits to be granted to willing colonizers (Murga 1961, I:16). A similar measure was also given to Sotomayor for Guanica. These were then the first settlers of Caparra, a mining camp in process of becoming a village in the course of the year 1510.

Sotomayor's enterprise was ill-fated; after he changed the original location of his village from Guanica to the mouth of the Añasco River, the Indian uprising led by Agueybana, burned and destroyed it. The remaining settlers sought refuge in Caparra where many of them remained permanently.

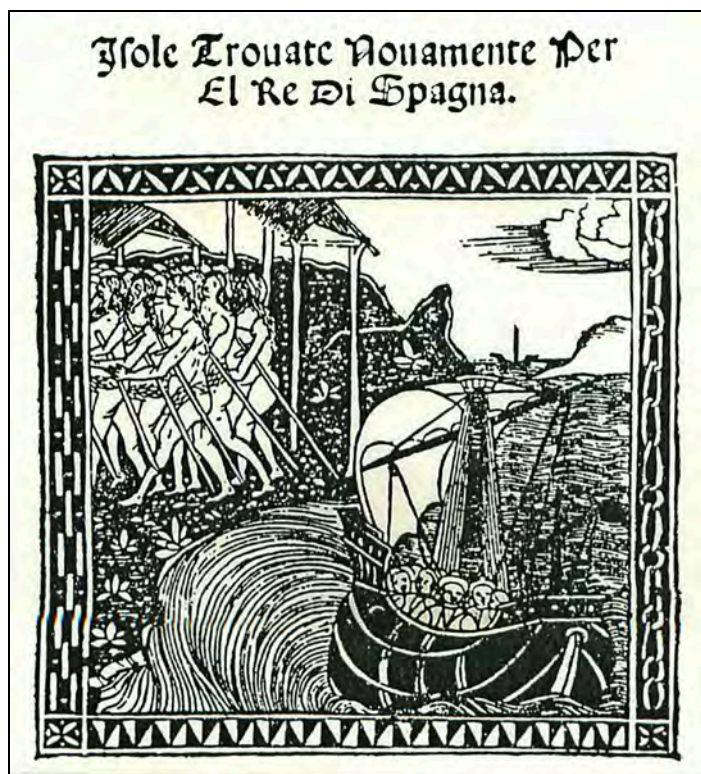


Fig. 1-C. Arrival of Spanish settlers with Juan Ponce de León to Borinquen. (Alegria 1978)

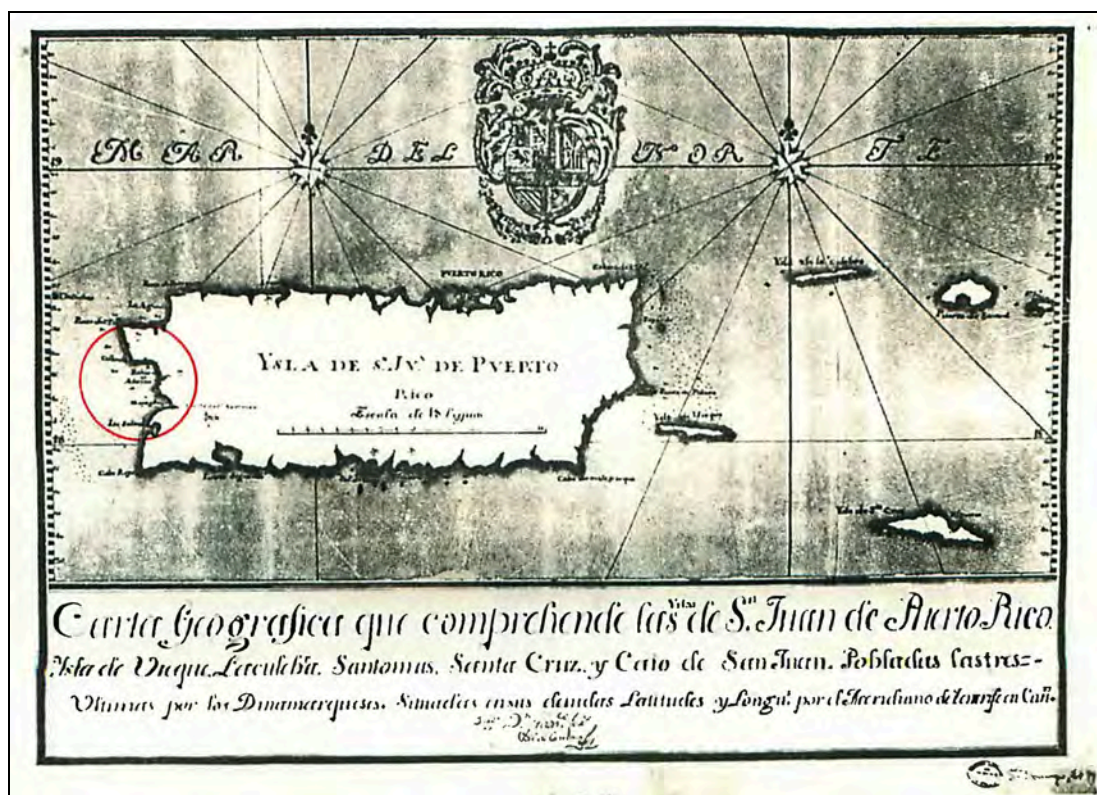


Fig. 2-C. Area of Ponce de Leo's landing site. (Archivo General de Indias 1966)

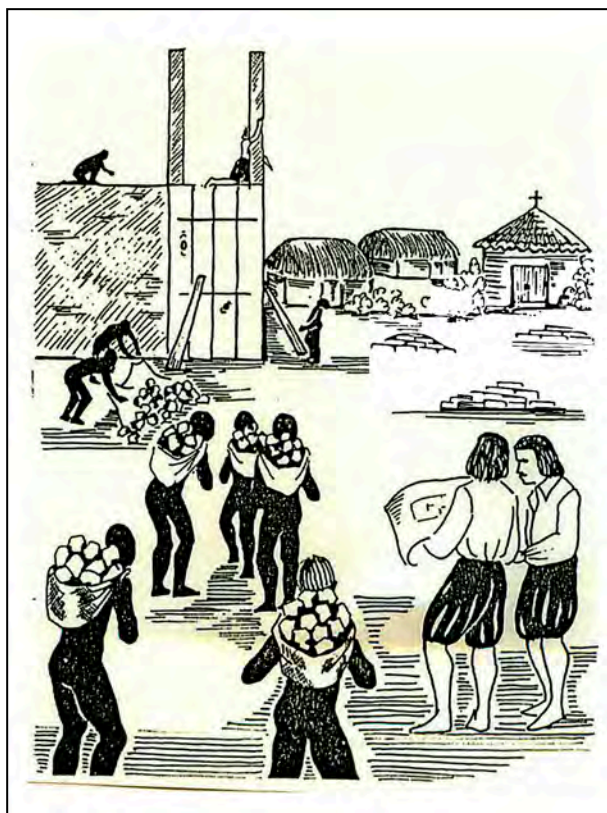


Fig. 3-c. Construction of Ponce de León stronghouse with Indian labor. (Alegria 1969)

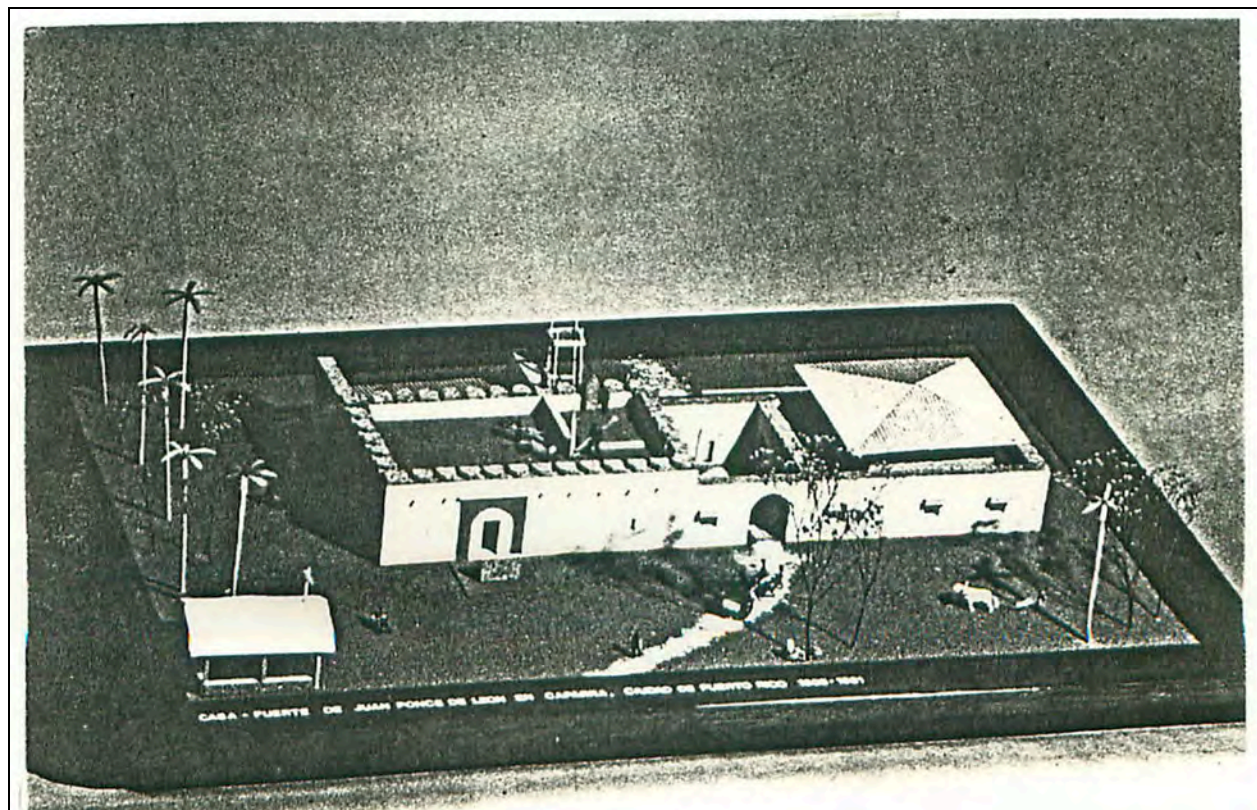


Fig. 4-C. First permanent structures erected at Caparra: one for defense purposes (left), architectural model. (Rosario 1984)

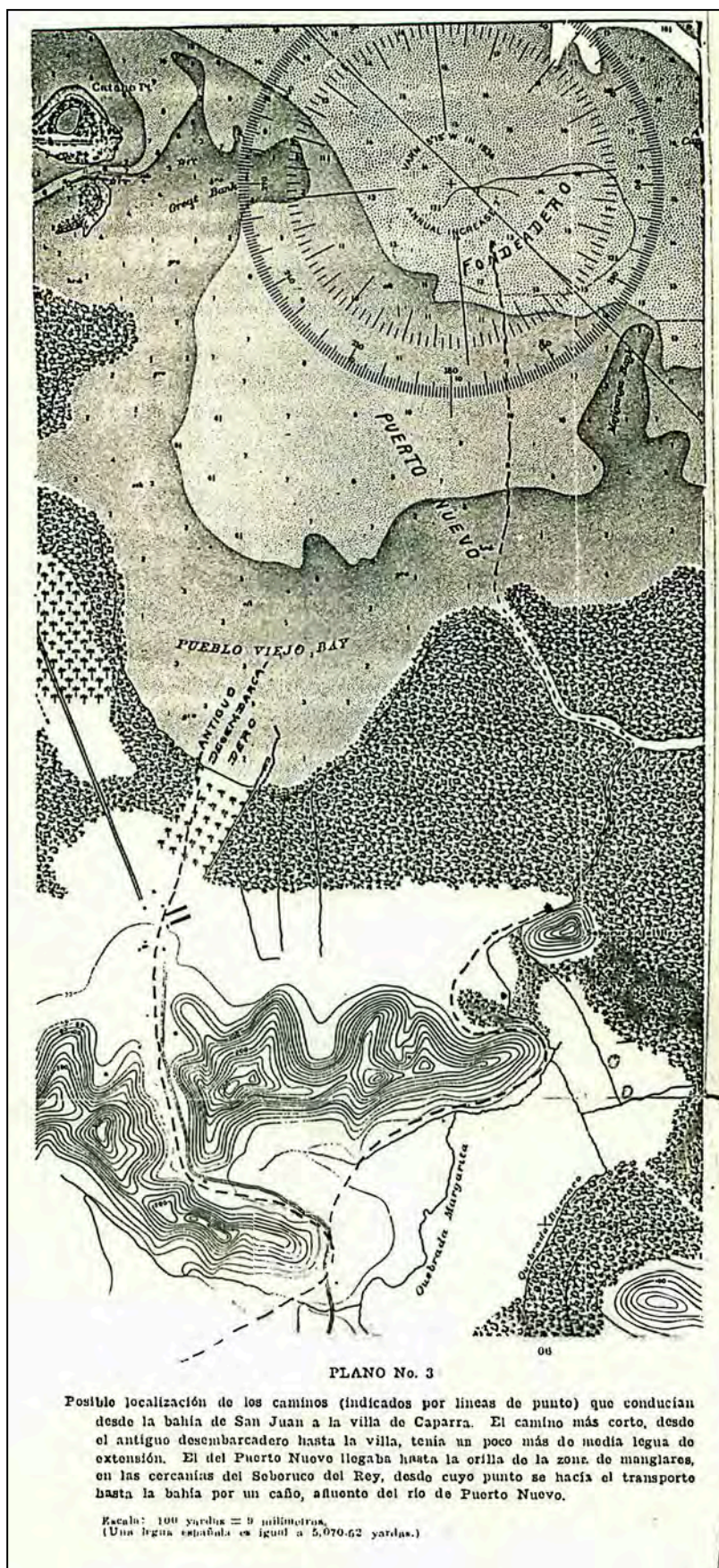


Fig. 5-C. Area of Pueblo Viejo showing topography, vegetation and path of roads leading from harbor to Caparra. Present site of Caparra is off plan towards left. (de Hostos 1938)

Caparra was not affected by this early Indian rebellion and soon received strong Royal support. During the year of 1511, the village was granted autonomy from Dominican overseers, in commercial, as well as political matters (CollyToste1915,II:54). The jurisdiction of Columbus' heirs was recognized but his overall power was greatly curtailed. The gold production, the *encomiendas* and everything that had to do with economic matters would be in the hands of royal appointees while the municipal affairs would also be guided by royal decrees. What laid behind this uplifting of Caparra's political status were two important factors: first, gold production was surpassing original expectation, and secondly, Caparra was intimately associated with Ponce de León, leader of the royal faction in the political struggle with Colón's clan, which was determined to undermine the village's existence. By the decree of November 22, 1511, the king prohibited the representatives of Diego Colón from moving Caparra from its present location (Murga 1959:80) and in 1514, ratified the order to the royal official that their permanent residence was to be in Caparra and not in San German as Ponce's foes intended (Murga 1961, I:275,286). In this respect, the city of Puerto Rico, as it was to be called after 1511, owed its existence to political circumstances more than to positive factors, since its very location had been a poor choice, being surrounded by mangroves and poorly connected to the coast by very hazardous roads which troubled and raised commodity prices, to the grief of all residents (Fig. 5-C). Nevertheless, its very poor location and the general discomfort of the population were to prevail at the end. Ironically, since that very favorable year of 1511, when the Crown granted numerous exemptions and favors to the village, it also clearly recognized its non-permanent nature and dictated urban policy accordingly. When Juan Cerón and Miguel Diaz returned to the Island to assume their offices in the name of Viceroy Diego Colón, they petitioned the king for construction material for the building of a foundry and the Crown answered in unequivocal terms:

Los oficiales de Sevilla me escriben que les pedis texas y ladrillos e oficiales albañiles e carpinteros e un calero para hacer la Casa de Fundición; este nin otro edificio non se debe facer fasta ver si conuerná mudarse ese pueblo a otro asiento; porque diz questa muy lejos de la mare es uno de los daños que podria tener; e por eso me parece que debeis de mirar vosotros juntamente con los nuestros oficiales si aca del puerto del mar hay algun buen sitio para donde se mude el pueblo; e facerme saber vuestro parecer todos juntamente; e entretanto sobreseed en la Casa de Fundición, pues se podra fundir en casa de paja (Colly Toste 1915 II:108).

The investments in public buildings were to be kept to a minimum, only enough to fulfill the basic governmental needs.

The original plan of the village was apparently laid out by Ponce de León himself, after signing his second contract with the Crown. Ponce had had previous experience in urban planning in Hispaniola, a fact recently discovered, and which points to the most certain application of Hispaniolan designs in Puerto Rico (Fig. 6-C). The obvious point of reference or starting point in the delineation of the village must have been the two original structures built for the Company and which eventually became his property (Murga 1959:64). The first one, originally a wooden fortress later became Ponce's residence and the second one, historically known as the *Casa de Piedra*, became the "de facto" government quarters. Besides these two lots, whose dimensions are not given, Ponce was allotted a third one, contiguously (most likely), and presumably all facing the village square (Fig. 7-C). The church faced the square also, but clearly did not occupy the whole side of it, since the bishop complained that his neighbors interrupted the divine worship and petitioned the adjacent lots to the Church in 1518:

Por parte del reverendo en Cristo, padre obispo de la dicha isla, del nuestro consejo, me ha sido hecha relación, que junto a su iglesia catedral, estan algunos solares de casas de algunas personas seculares, vecinos de esa ciudad, que habitan y moran en ellas, lo cual es en perjuicio de la dicha iglesia y del culto divino que en ella se celebra y me suplicó y pidió por merced que pagando al dueño de tal solar lo que justamente valiere, se pueda tomar para los incorporar en la dicha iglesia ... (Murga 1961, II :31J).

Within the lot of the church, or neighboring it, was the bishop's residence which the sources distinguish from the church itself. On another side of the square were the houses belonging to the City Council (*casas capitulares*), probably followed by the *Casa del Rey*, a large *bohío* housing the customs and foundry house. After the storm of 1514, these seem to have been abandoned in favor of the security offered by the "*Casa de Piedra*". So it was ordered by the king to Treasurer Andres de Haro:

En lo que decis del peligro en que estan las escrituras y cosas nuestras que estan a vuestro cargo, por ser las casas pajizas, entretanto que de otra manera se remedia, podreis las tener en las casas de Juan Ponce de León, pues habeis de residir en Puerto Rico. (Murga 1961 , I:317)

Progressively, the royal officials occupied the whole *Casa de Piedra* until it became popularly known as his majesty's house. As such, it was the only "stone" structure in the whole village, having been built with bricks imported from Spain (Tió 1961). Some information is shed as to the buildings in Ponce's lots, in the property deed itself, dated February 22, 1511:

... vos hago merced de tres solares que vos teneys e poseeys ocupados en unas casas de piedra y tierra que hicisteis en la dicha isla de San Juan, en la villa de Caparra, e ansi mismo en otras de madera y paja que son necesarias para el servicio de la dicha casa lo cual todo lo teneys cercado e cerrado para que los dichos tres solares sean vuestros propios e podays hacer en ellos lo que quisieredes e per bien tuvieredes (Murga 1961, I:463).

So the third lot was occupied by *casas de servicio* or servant's quarters. A second story was added to the *bohio* housing the Customs and Foundry in 1516 and its cost is detailed in the books of the Royal Exchequer (Tanodi 1971). The lot was equally fenced, but this structure was also abandoned after 1514, at least by the foundry officials because private huts were rented in 1515 for use as foundries. The rest of the village square was surrounded by private houses owned by prominent *vecinos*. One of these, a nobleman named Iñigo de Zuniga, is mentioned in the sources as living in front of the village square (Murga 1959:87).

Vecinos, or first class citizens, lived closest to the square followed by *moradores* or would-be citizens. Proximity to the center of town was a status symbol then, as it is today (Fig. 8-C). Married *vecinos* were allotted free whole lots, while bachelors received only half a lot (Rodriguez 1978:261). Many large *bohios* were built with divisions which permitted the renting of rooms to non-property owners or for stores. Many of these were probably erected in the incoming streets. For the location of the City Council House, there is a prime reference given in 1520 during the trial of Sancho Velazquez which reads:

(las casas) de Cabildo, de la dicha ciudad, que son junto a las casas de morada del señor licenciado De la Gama ... (Murga 1957, II:536).

De la Gama, new Chief Justice, and son-in-law of Juan Ponce, lived in Ponce's *Casa de Piedra* at the time. This is also the only indication to the effect that the *Casa de Piedra* faced the village square.

Caparra also housed other important buildings which must be mentioned. First of these was the butcher shop. By tradition and by law, no village could be founded without it. It was a guarantee and a measure of the village's capacity to sustain its population. Its supervision was entrusted to the Cabildo whose regulations guided all its affairs. It probably was built on the outskirts of town.

The second establishment of popular importance was the hospital. The Crown rarely disregarded its responsibility towards hospitals which, more than a medical unit, were care centers for the poor and the needy. Religious services and hot soup were probably its most common resource. By order of the Royal Decree of the 22nd of July 1511, one hundred Indians were allotted to the hospital in Caparra (Murga 1961, I:422). Nevertheless, these were removed in 1515 in the re-allotment of the Indians which was carried out by Velazquez. We do not know if this meant that the hospital was closed down or whether it was taken over by the Church, because soon afterwards, the Bishop claimed those Indians for himself. Pharmacists, doctors, and surgeons appear among the residents of Caparra, but not associated with the hospital. They were probably private practitioners with offices elsewhere.

The cemetery was also built, probably within the church itself as was the practice of the times. This unsanitary measure was not altered until the 18th century. In 1534, when Bishop Bastidas of Venezuela was called in to investigate the accounts of Bishop Manso, he received a report on the income from the burial rites. But the number of burials is impossible to determine until we can find out the amounts charged. A Franciscan Monastery was also in existence up until 1519.

Since 1509, the Crown had issued instructions for the islands, to the effect that colonizers be kept in the towns (Muñoz 1981: 67). This meant that, even though farms or country houses existed scattered around, settlers had to be accounted for in villages. *Vecinos* were urban property owners by virtue of their condition, but most residents were not. These were tenants in rooms rented to *vecinos* who readily converted themselves into landlords, dividing their lots or buying new ones for speculative purposes. Large rectangular *bohios* were divided and converted into shops, offices or rooms. Francisco de Cardona, former Treasurer, admitted that the transfer of the city would harm his rent:

e queste testigo tiene tantas e mas casas como cualquier vecino del pueblo e perderá arta renta en ellas.
(Colly Toste 1916, III:98)

Another *vecino* was more precise as to the amount of houses owned:

...e preguntado cuantas casas tiene en la dicha ciudad, dixo que once casas, de las cuales tiene las tres caidas e las otras arrendadas... (Colly Toste 1916, III:111).

Caparra was virtually surrounded by woodlands, so that the main construction materials were readily available. Wood-and-straw houses mingled with wood-and-tile ones, the tiles having been imported from Castille. The different construction typologies marked the difference in social ranks. In clear contradiction, the Crown avoided expenditures in public buildings while prompting the *vecinos* to invest in more permanent dwellings. References were made to ordinances dictating the construction of stone houses by *vecinos* making 2,000 pesos or more a year (Murga 1959:71). The measure was watered down to earthen houses in 1514 (Murga 1961, I:269), but neither was carried out during Caparra's existence. Besides the *Casa Fuerte*, built with bricks and cut stones brought in from the islet of San Juan (Coll y Toste 1916, III:108), only a basement-type construction is mentioned as having been built under the church. It was later abandoned because of excessive humidity. Nonetheless, and given the strong class consciousness of the times, many *vecinos*, being noblemen, must have invested in bricks for porches, verandas, walkways and floors, in an effort to impress their social distance in a land where status symbols were few. Bricks were produced after 1512 locally, and maybe even tiles (Coll y Toste 1915, II:109). The large Indian labor gangs allotted by the *encomienda* system, guaranteed a constant labor supply. The heavy rains and the proximity to the marshlands must have forced the inhabitants to at least attempt to pave some areas with stones. Wells and ovens are mentioned as part of most *vecino* residences which gives us an insight into some of the daily activities of the village (Coll y Toste 1916, III:85). Some neighbors complained, although, as to the quality of the water. Limestone was abundant for construction purposes.

In his deposition of 1519, Ponce de León sheds some light as to the roads in Caparra: "*Primeramente, que tiene tres salidas para la servidumbre desta ciudad por la traves.*" (Coll y Toste 1916, III:84) In other words, three roads crossed the city. One of these led to the port and was known as *Camino del Puerto Nuevo*, the other, an older one was known as *Camino del Puerto Viejo* (ibid:84). The third road led to the mines west-northwest of the city (Fig. 5-C). Apparently, all were difficult to keep in good condition. The Cabildo was in charge of keeping the roads open, that is, clean from weeds and properly "paved" (*adobadas*) after the rainy season. For that purpose, Indian laborers and the income from local fines were granted (Murga 1961, I:262). In 1514, Juan Ponce was commissioned to receive the fines and invest part of the money in the construction of houses for rent within the City Council's urban lot for the benefit of the roads (ibid). Surrounded as it was by woods, the village people felt "lost in the woods." Some of its neighbors complained that Caparra was enclosed within *ciénagas y arcabucos*; another was more dramatic:

porque está metida en este hoyo, cerrada de monte sin ninguna rivera e no tiene ninguna salida para que ninguno pueda salir del circuito della a pie ni cabalgando. (Coll y Toste 1916, III:87)

Women would wash clothes in the river, the search for firewood would make some venture the town's perimeter, but overall it seems life was quite dull for most residents. The quality of life seems to have been rather poor. High mortality rate for children was voiced:

... porquel dicho sitio lo tiene por muy enfermo e malo ... en el se crían muy pocas criaturas, e las que se crían, se crían muy enfermas, e la mayor parte de la gente viven enfermos e llagados (Coll y Toste 1916, III:103).

We must not blame the location of Caparra for all its woes. Sanitary conditions in most European cities at the time suffered equally. Streets were littered with filth, personal hygiene was non-existent (Morales Padrón 1977; Domínguez 1978). Caparra was not to be an exception.

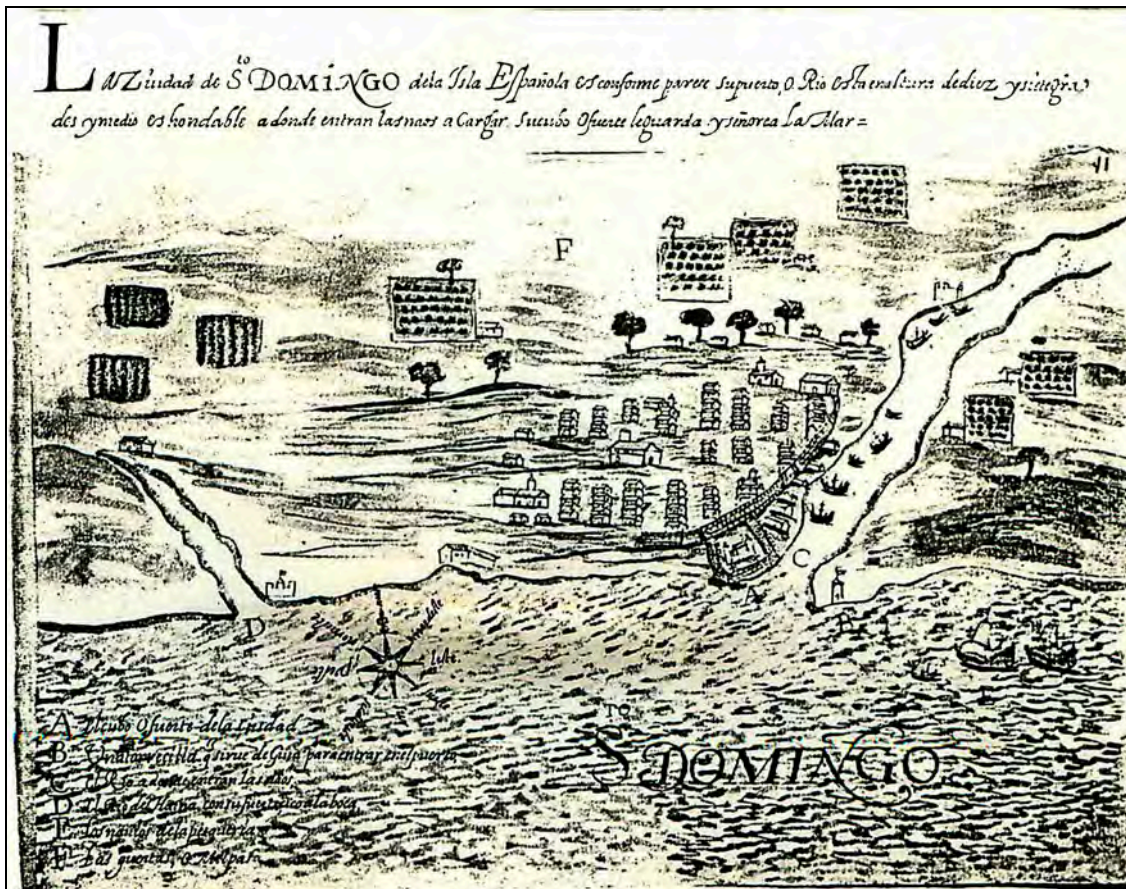


Fig. 6-C. Map of the city of Santo Domingo in Hispaniola by Nicolas de Cardona. (Mardid 1632)

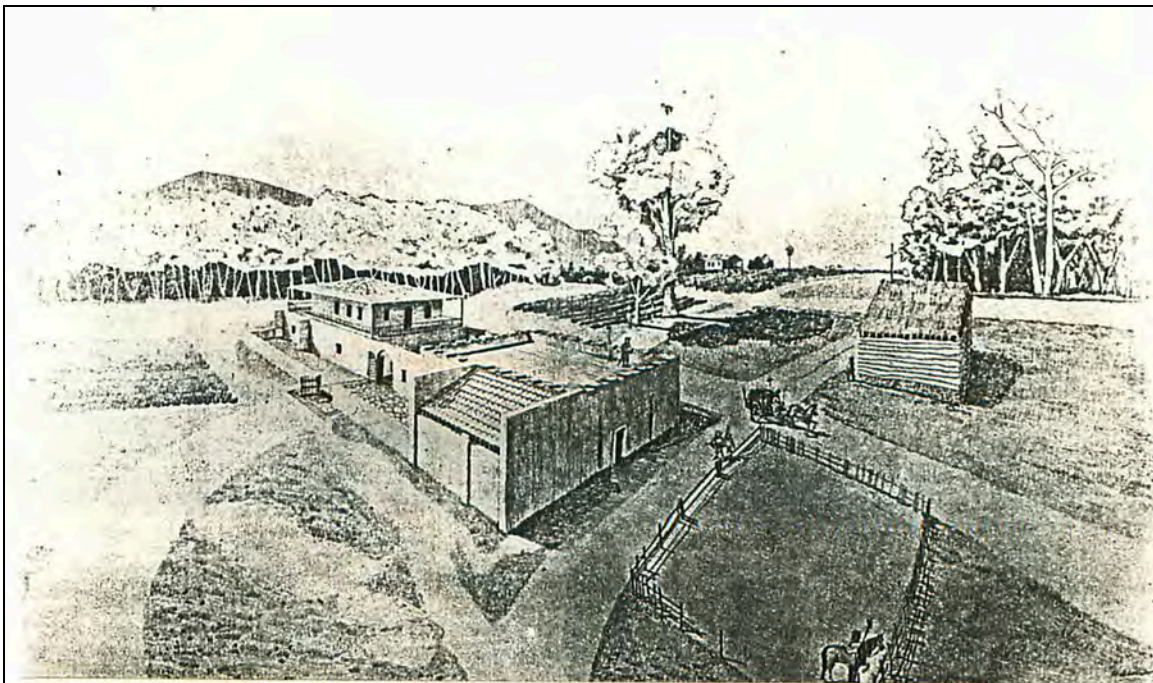


Fig. 7-C. Artistic representation of what Caparra might have looked like. (Rosario 1984)

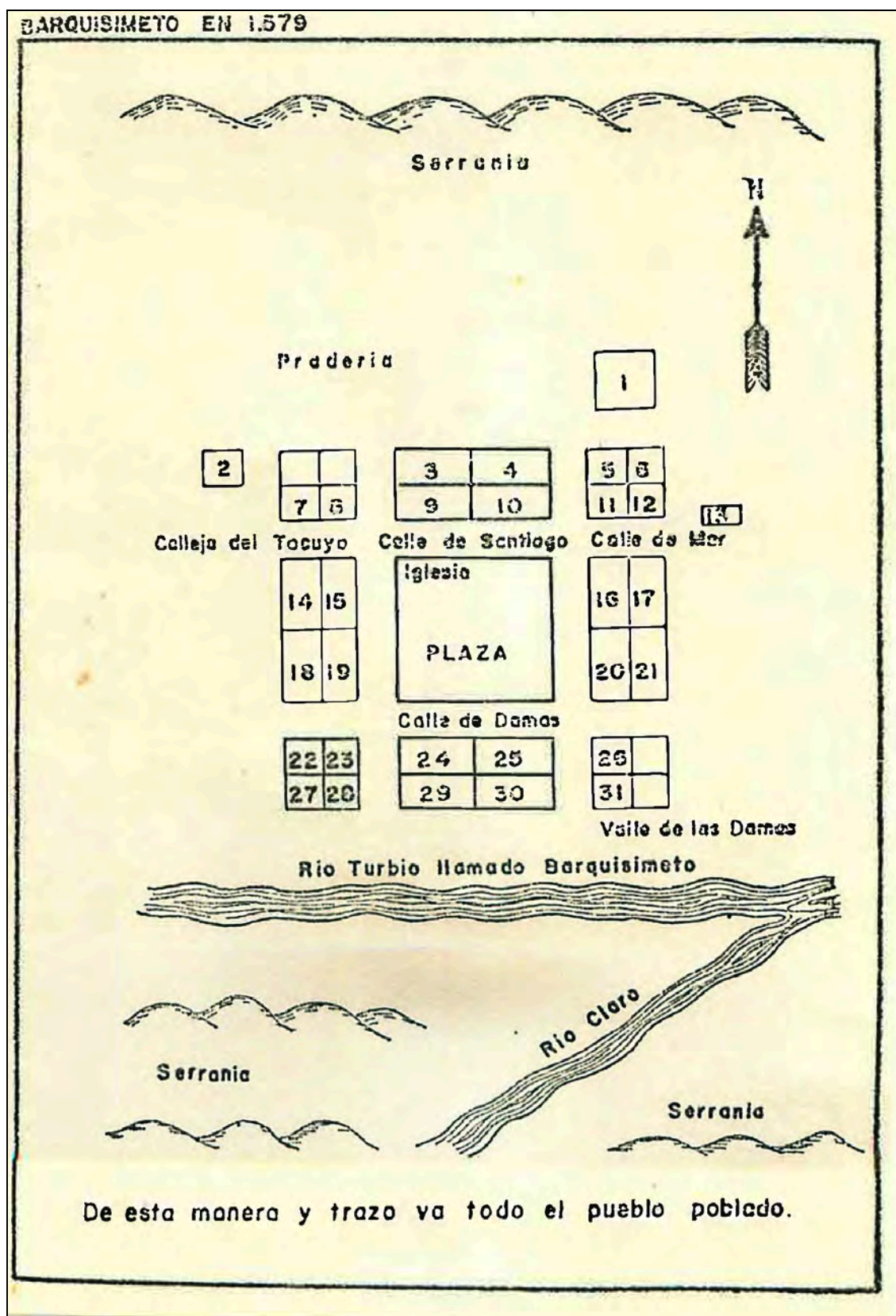


Fig. 8C. Plan of Barquisimeto in 1579 showing larger and more important lots facing the main town plaza.

Fires

The existence of Caparra was threatened by two fires. The first one occurred in 1513 when the village was attacked by Indians as part of their second major counter-offensive. The different reports add important information about the settlement. The Church seems to have been a major target and was totally burned down and pillaged. From the Bishop's report we can confirm that the church was constructed of wood and straw at a cost of 350 pesos. The new church was rebuilt immediately (Justicia 987). The Bishop's residence was also burned down (Murga 1961, II:41). Other reports stated that most of the village had been burned: "... *todo lo mas del quemado*" an eyewitness detailed that twenty nine houses (*casas de paja*) were lost, the church and specifically, the house of *vecino* Juan Martin Peña. One cannot help but wonder why the church was attacked and not the other public buildings surrounding the town square? No public building is ever mentioned. One possible answer could be that most public buildings as well as private ones were fenced in, while the church was probably not. The point can be argued further. The stone house served as shelter for many villagers so that we can conclude that it was already finished at the time.

The second fire occurred in 1519. In the *Probanza* of Francisco De Cardona we find the major references:

Item si saben, etc. que durante el dicho tiempo se prendió un fuego en esta ciudad en que se quemaron 30 casas de vecinos y mercad eres, los cuales visto el peligro y daño recibido se fueron a vivir a otras partes fuera de la isla y dejaron de tratar a causa de lo cual hubo mucha disminución en la dicha renta. (Santo Domingo 19)

The local officials confirmed the tragedy in a letter dated 24 May 1519:

Puede haber dos meses que se quemaron una rinconada de casas, entre las cuales se quemo la de Juan Perez, Escribano de la Renta y Remate. (Contaduria 1073).

It is interesting to note that both occurrences affected an almost equal number of structures. But the figure should not be taken lightly. Thirty houses in 1513 could have comprised most of the town, but in 1519, the figure is referred to as simply a *rinconada* of houses. This should give us a measure from which to infer the growth of the village. The demographic aspect herein will be deferred for the time being until the three most important lifestreams of the village are inserted into the picture. These are mining, commercial and the administrative roles by which the village was affected.

Caparra as a Mining Center

Caparra was the only center for the smelting of gold from 1510 to 1513 when another foundry was established in San German (Fig. 9-C). Its assayers were none the less responsible for the gold recovered in the whole district of Puerto Rico. That is, from the Camuy River to the east, where the main placer fields were found. Every miner had to acquire an annual license in Caparra itself, which was renewable at the end of the gathering season. This measure forced everyone involved in the economic venture to return to town and pay the Royal Fifth. With time, gold smelting was carried out twice a year in each town, which meant that the mining villages received large multitudes of hungry and thirsty workers, seeking goods and services of all sorts. With gold in hand, saloons, improvised hotels, hardware stores and the like, came to life. Food, mainly cassava bread, oil, fish and pig, was bought on credit for the next immediate season. Debts were paid in the Foundry House and creditors abounded. We are historically faced with a large mobile population which came in and out of Caparra several times a year. Many of the miners probably affected the outskirts of town more than the center, where the permanent *vecinos* and "moradores" lived permanently. Herds of hogs and foodstuffs from the countryside were brought in for sale and corrals had to be constructed. Gold smelting usually lasted for over a month and sometimes as long as two.

Gold production on the island quadrupled between 1510 and 1520 which means that the population also grew. At the time of its transfer to the islet in 1521, Caparra was at its height economically speaking. Permanent *vecinos* were recorded as over forty in number by Ponce de León in 1519 (Coll y Toste 1916, III:85), a figure which would amount to 200 persons if the term is understood as meaning heads of families. We would add an additional 200 for *moradores*, or permanent would-be *vecinos*, merchants and public officials. Domestic servants and slaves not incorporated into the mining activities could amount to another 200, given the ranks involved and the services rendered in town. This would give us a reasonable figure of 600 permanent residents in Caparra. To these we now must add the transients from ships which remained in the city months at a time, and miners from the district not accounted for in the permanent structure of the town. Conservatively speaking, we must expect a multitude of well over a thousand persons in town during parts of the year. Most Indians allotted to *vecinos* were kept in their own

villages or in the farms. Negro slaves were comparatively few in number yet, but most of them were urban workers. The proximity of many *haciendas* to Caparra, distant only two leagues, whether in Bayamón or the Toa areas, also fostered a daily traffic between the two (Fig. 10-C).

The Foundry house with its own lot was erected in 1510. It was but a large "bohío" with a brick chimney, an oven and a palisade (Contaduría 1072). By 1514, a storm had destroyed it and the smelting was carried out in rented lots. Soon afterwards, the royal *bohío* was reconstructed and a second story added to it, but it was occasionally burned down. The chimney had to be rebuilt every year and apparently a brick floor was also added. A large number of activities were carried out in this particular lot by the constant bringing in of firewood, bricks, salt, and activities like rock-breaking, and wood construction. By 1520 most of the villages founded by Ovando in the island of Hispaniola were abandoned. Only the city of Santo Domingo flourished, followed still by La Concepción de la Vega, both mining centers. Caparra came third in the entire Caribbean area.



Fig. 9-C. Mining activities with Indian slaves. (Pantel et. al. 1986)

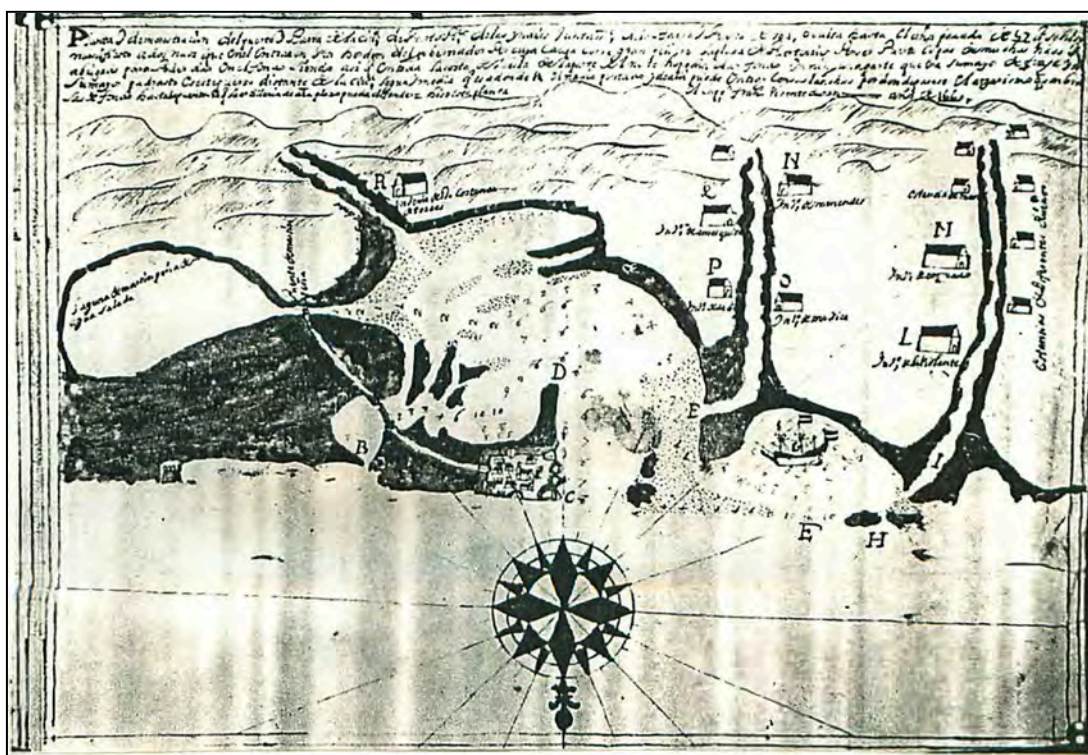


Fig. 10-C. The proximity of many *haciendas* to the general area of Caparra (North is pointing down). (Archivo General de las Indias 1966)

Caparra as a Commercial Center

Interwoven with the mining process was the city's role as the leading importer and distributor of goods; a role also shared with San Germán. All types of commodities came from Spain, from tools to luxury items (Fig. 11-C). These were both sold locally, as well as sold to a multitude of intermediaries called *regatones*, who in turn sold them in the mining camps of the interior. As the pearl fisheries in Cubagua developed after 1512, Caparra also re-exported there. Along with Santo Domingo, Caparra was also an important base for the replenishment of the numerous slave *armadas* which roamed the circum-Caribbean region. Slaves were continuously brought in and sold at public auctions in the village's square. Very important among the foodstuffs was the cassava trade. In spite of being a basic commodity for miners and sailors, the Island could only produce a minor part of it. *Encomenderos* preferred to invest Indian labor in the more productive search for gold. Thus, cassava bread was imported from Mona and Hispaniola and redistributed from Caparra. Shipments from Jamaica are also recorded. As a port city, Caparra was also the seat of an important colony of commercial agents from Seville, involved in credit operations. These were, along with the royal officials, the town's elite and many times they were all one and the same. As a result of its commercial importance, a very important segment of its society was composed of artisans, masons, smiths, carpenters, tailors, barbers, cobblers, and the like, whose services were really the backbone of city life. Non-specialized workers on the contrary, were few in number, making salaried work a very expensive item. Indian hands filled the gap while they lasted. Women were greatly under-represented, but those who were there, devoted themselves to every task from wives to prostitutes. Sexual relations seem to have been quite frequent (Sued y Lopez 1987). Thus, every chore represented a space in the city and implied activity.

The following list of naval traffic which touched the San Juan Bay while Caparra was in existence, will give us an idea of its commercial life:

Year	Number of Ships
1512	8
1513	21
1514	11
1515	17
1516	45
1517	28
1518	13
1519	33
1520	49

The list combines the sources from *Contaduria* and *Contratacion* in the Archives of Seville, giving us a fairly complete picture. Most of these came either from Spain or Santo Domingo. As we can see, at the moment of its transfer to the islet, Caparra was at its highest peak in commercial activity. The same can be said with regard to its gold shipments (Patronato 198). This importance clearly accelerated its transfer to a more suitable location for its commercial and naval endeavors. Given its poor location with reference to the harbor, it is possible that many warehouses were to be found not in the city proper, but nearer to the coast, leaving to the city the smaller retail shops. Complete lists of items imported from Spain and elsewhere have been published and are available for the interested reader (Tanodi 1971).

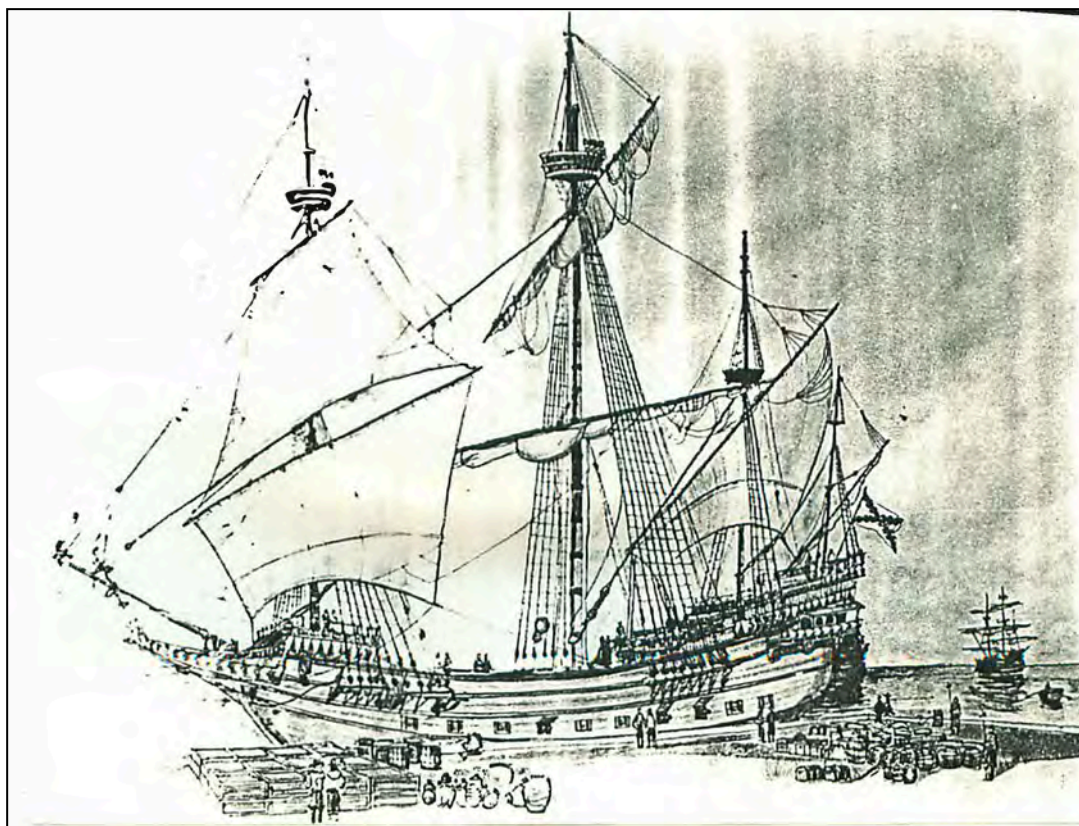


Fig. 11-C. Import of commodities from Spain. (Borrell B. 1976)

Caparra as an Administrative Center

The village was both the center of the insular government as well as the municipal seat. By law, all its public officials had to reside there. These were preferably married and property owners. During the early years of the settlement, insular officials were mere assistants to Dominican hierarchs, but after 1514, they became royal appointees with all rights and privileges. Their number will illustrate the importance of the village:

INSULAR ROYAL OFFICERS

Treasurer
Comptroller
Factor
Veedor de Minas
Teniente de Gobernador, Alcalde Mayor or Justicia Mayor
Escribano Mayor de Minas

MUNICIPAL OFFICERS

8 Councillors (*Regidores*, royal appointees for life)
2 *Alcaldes Ordinaries* (Justices of the Peace)
1 *Alguacil Mayor*
3 *Escribanos de Numero*
1 *Procurador* (legal representative of the people)

Besides these formal appointees, the system included a number of notaries, assistants, jailers, public overseers, custom duties collectors and inspectors, and an impressive number of college graduates (*bachilleres*). Public service was then a very important aspect of the general life of the city. To these echelons, the religious community must be added. A monastery of

Franciscan priests has already been mentioned, to which the members of the the bishopric must be added. Bishop Manso arrived at Caparra late in 1512 and although he soon returned to Spain, part of his assistants remained. The religious community could have then, comprised some 15 members.

To sum up the social profile of the city, we can say that a small elite of *vecinos hidalgos* held the highest positions, perhaps twenty of them. This was followed by a large middle-class, composed of merchants, public officers (all *vecinos*), liberal professionals (clergymen, notaries and the like), followed by other property owners, shop keepers, artisans and assistants, and a plebian group of workers and servants. All these European-born segments rested on a wide Indian labor-base with scattered negro slaves which composed the base of the pyramid. Slave labor dominated all other activities. *Vecinos* alone held from forty to one hundred and forty *encomienda* Indians without the Indian slaves acquired in the labor markets. As to marital status, most *vecinos* were supposed to be married, but had left their wives in Spain. Bachelors dominated the "defacto" life of the community.

Aftermath

The city was transferred during the better part of 1521 (Fig. 12-C). By the next year, the foundry was operating in the islet, and by 1523 the figure of seventy to eighty *vecinos* is given (Murga1961, II:288). This is probably a more reliable figure for the core population of Caparra during its last years, or approximately five hundred, with an encircling population movement involving 1500 souls. Most of the structures in Caparra were torn down and the salvageable building materials transported to the new site (Fig. 13-C). A hundred years later Diego de Torres Vargas (1647) could still observe:

En ella se labraron algunas casas de piedra, de que hoy parecen cimientos y se hallan rastros aunque pocos
(Tapia 1970:543).

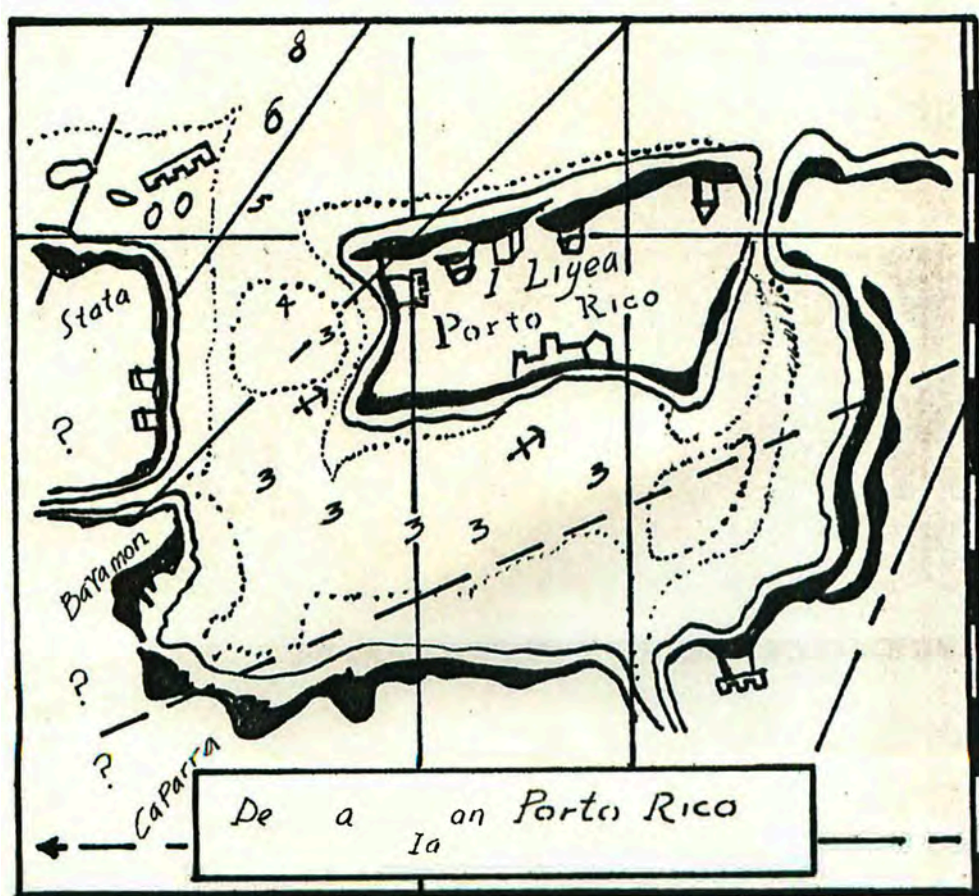


Fig. 12-C. Map of islet of San Juan and general location of Caparra. Unknown author and date, traced and delineated by R. Rosario in 1984 from a photograph of the original plan. (de Hostos' personal files 1936)

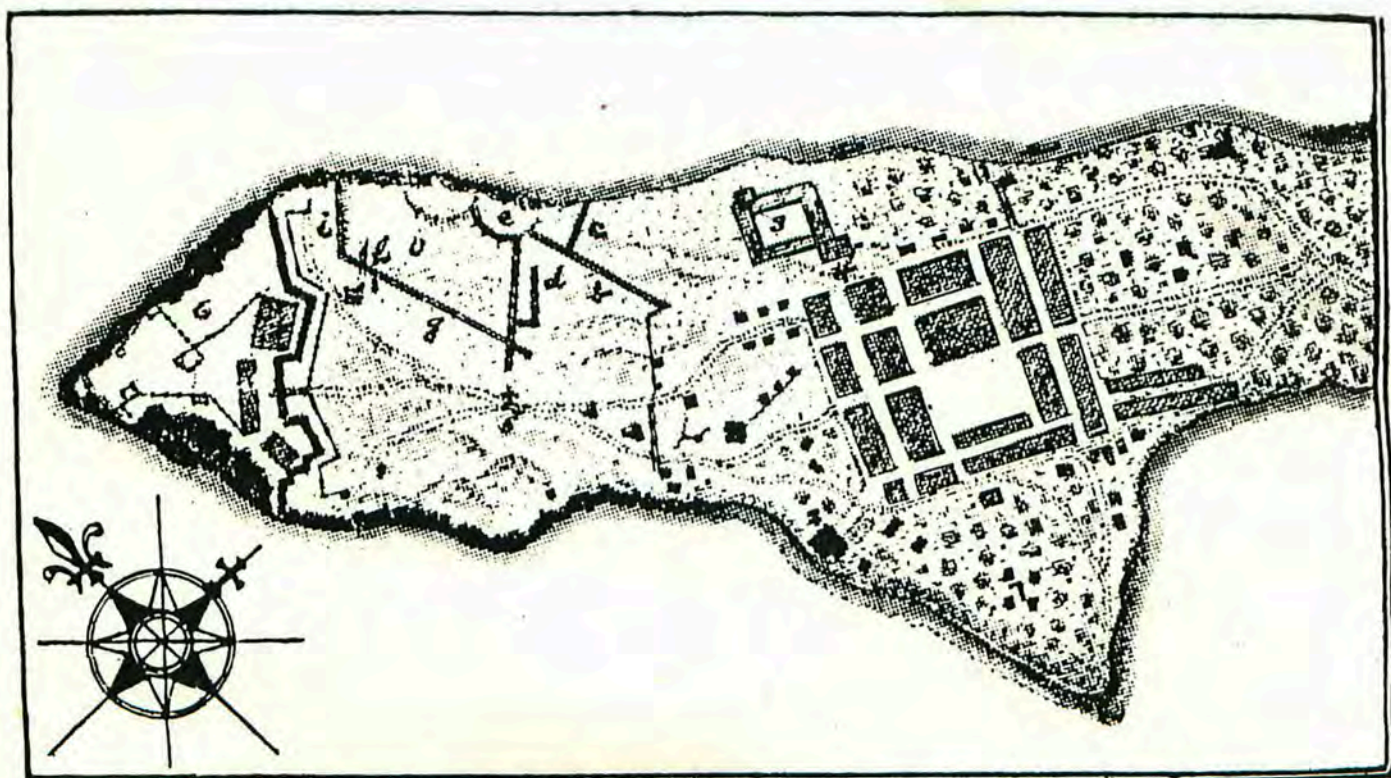


Fig. 2.—La ciudad de San Juan en 1625. 1.—La plaza Principal (entonces un mercado); 2.—La Fortaleza (residencia del gobernador); 3.—Monasterio de Dominicos; 4.—Iglesia del Monasterio; 5.—Capillita del Calvario; 6.—El fuerte del Morro; 7.—La Puntilla; a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i.—Las obras de sitio (trincheras, traveses, media-lunas y aproches construidas por los holandeses al mando del general Hendricksz para reducir el fuerte del Morro). Del plano intitulado «Grondt-Teeckening vande Stadt en Kasteel Porto Rico ende gelegenheyt vande Haven». (sin fecha).

Fig. 13-C. Map of San Juan, 1625. (de Hostos 1981)

SECTION D: CAPARRA: THE FIRST EUROPEAN
URBAN CENTER IN PUERTO RICO



(Alexander 1976)

CAPARRA: THE FIRST EUROPEAN URBAN CENTER IN PUERTO RICO

The building of Caparra reveals in part the early stages of urban planning procedures as well as the problems confronted by the early Spanish settlers in the Caribbean.

Having nearly completed the pacification and occupation of La Española through a vigorous urban foundation program, Governor Nicolas de Ovando turned his attention to the other Caribbean islands that were officially under his jurisdiction. In 1508, Ovando dispatched Sebastian de Ocampo to make a reconnaissance survey of the coasts of Cuba in order to prepare its future occupation. In the same year, Juan Ponce de León received authorization to start the survey and immediate occupation of Puerto Rico. Ponce de León departed from the city of Santo Domingo to the island of Puerto Rico on July 12, 1508. A few months later, Caparra was established as the first European urban center outside La Española from where the conquering process in Puerto Rico was to begin.

From 1508, Caparra was part of the developing urban system within the Caribbean archipelago. These early urban centers were utilized as bases from where to launch the conquering expeditions to the continent. Its role as the main center of conquest in Puerto Rico, as well as a port-of-call in the Caribbean, defines Caparra as an important urban archaeological site that needs to be carefully studied. Revealing its physical and social structure will provide vital information to understand the early stages of urbanism in Puerto Rico and consequently in the Americas.

In order to describe and analyze the possible urban structure of Caparra, one has to rely on several sources: the written contemporary descriptions, old maps and iconography, aerial photos, and archaeological surveys. Since the settlement was abandoned around 1519, when it was transferred to the present site of San Juan, the exact site of Caparra was to disappear in history. Only the area in general remained named as "Pueblo Viejo" (Tanodi 1971:71).

Few direct references concerning Caparra are mentioned on the official documents after 1519. One of the rare occasions in which the site is mentioned is in a document dated 1524 referring to certain construction materials (doors, boards, ironworks, etc.) that were taken out from the Royal House at *Pueblo Viejo*. This fact indicates the town was completely abandoned and the useful construction materials removed.

Another reference to Caparra's site was made in 1582 by Governor Melgarejo, indicating to King Felipe II the existence of a horse-powered sugar mill near the site of Caparra:

y esta come a una legua de la ciudad de Caparra, que se despobló... (Caro Costas 1972:145).

Another rare example referring to the site is dated 1647. In this document Torres Vargas describes the remains of an old stone structure of the villa indicating that there were still a few foundations standing at the site. From that date onwards, up to the 1930's, no one had apparently been able to identify the exact location of the site of Caparra.

Cartography

Concerning the cartographic materials related to Caparra, there is only one available period plan of the region illustrating the approximate location site of the city.

Unfortunately this plan, prepared by Rodrigo de Figueroa in 1519 who had the eminent move of Caparra in mind, does not illustrate the interior layout of the town and includes only the perimeter (Fig. 1-D). However, this unique plan constitutes the first map concerning an urban center in the Americas.

No other plan illustrates the approximate site of Caparra until the late 18th and 19th centuries. The first accurate plan of the region in general was prepared by Thomas O'Daly in 1776. By this time no visible traces of Caparra were present. The remains of an old sugar mill structure from the latter part of the 16th century and the structure of an 18th century plantation house, both illustrated on this plan, and located near the true ruins of the old town, probably misled 19th century cartographers and popular tradition. Caparra's site was confused with the ruins of either of these two structures. An 1887 plan (Fig. 2-D) apparently identified the visible ruins of an 18th century plantation house as the *Hermita de la antigua Caparra*.

Fig. 1-D. Map indicating islet of San Juan and general area of Caparra (lower left corner) by Rodrigo de Figueroa (1519). (Sepulveda 1986)

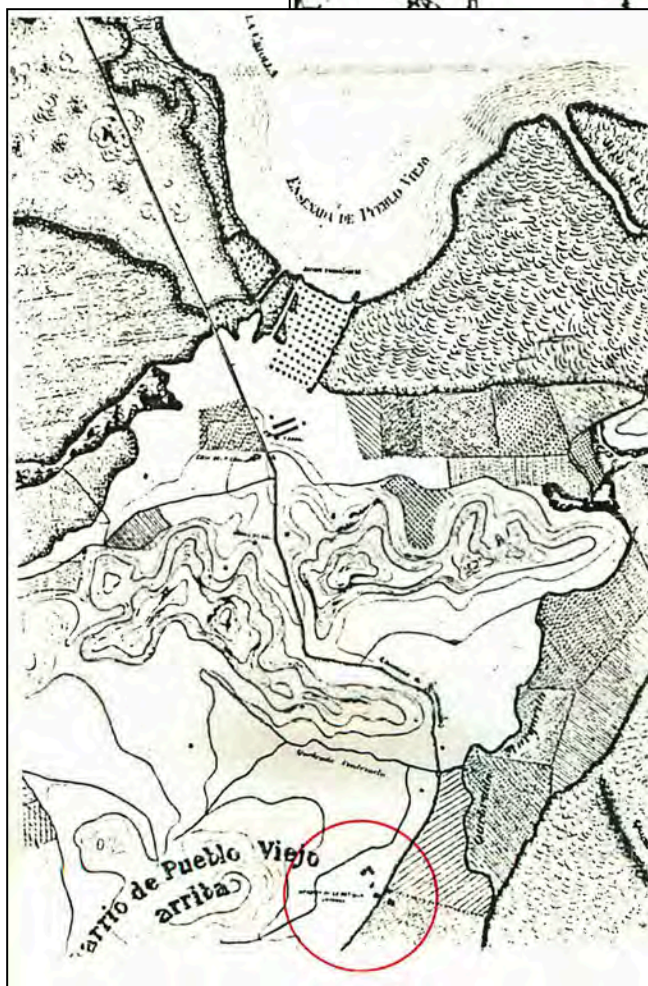
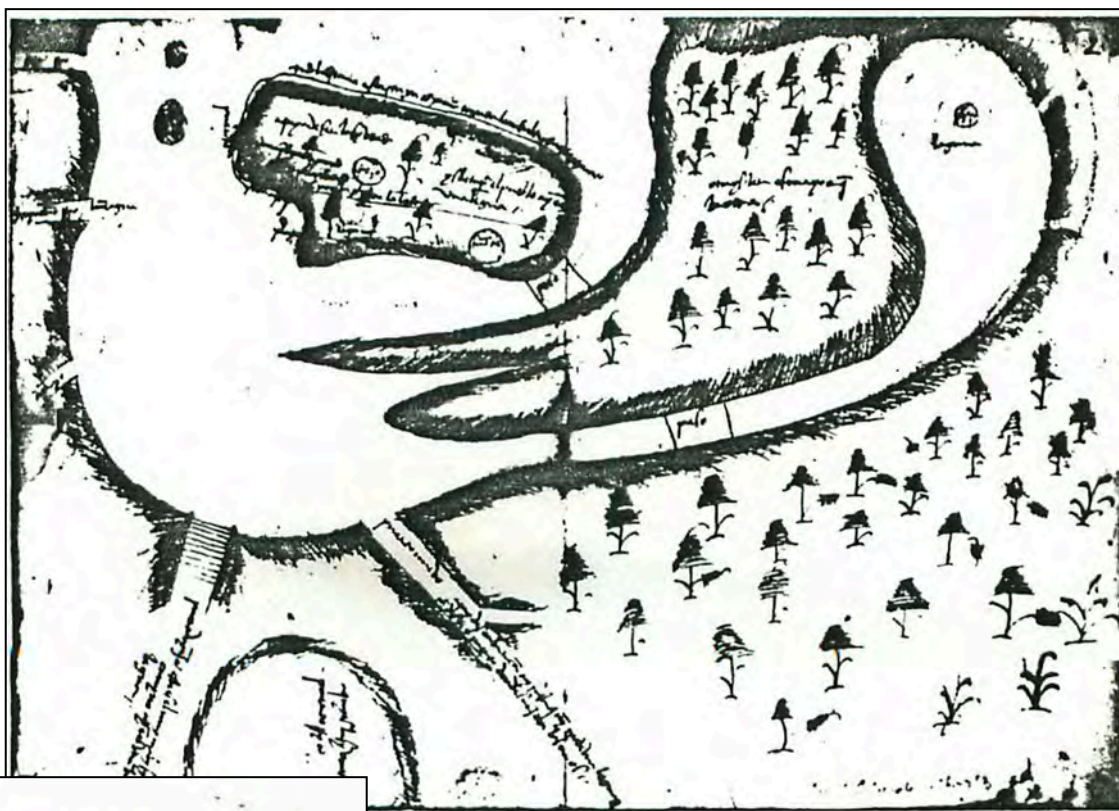


Fig. 2-D. Caparra region in 1887. (Sepulveda 1986)

Iconography

A photograph taken in 1898, and published in the books titled Our Islands and Their People, illustrates "The ruins of Ponce de León's fort" (Fig. 3-D). These highly visible ruins are certainly not from the 16th century fortified structure. Instead, they probably refer to the ruins of the 18th century plantation house.

In 1908, public festivities were held to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Ponce de León's arrival in Puerto Rico. A group of citizens organized a meeting at "Caparra's site" under the supposition that those ruins were in fact Ponce de León's headquarters at Caparra. They were misled by the popular tradition which confused the actual site of the ruins.

Another fact that definitively indicates the ignorance of the true site, was the construction in 1917 of road PR-#2 over the real ruins of Ponce de León's house at Caparra. It was not until 1937 that archaeological analysis clarified the real site of Ponce de León's house.

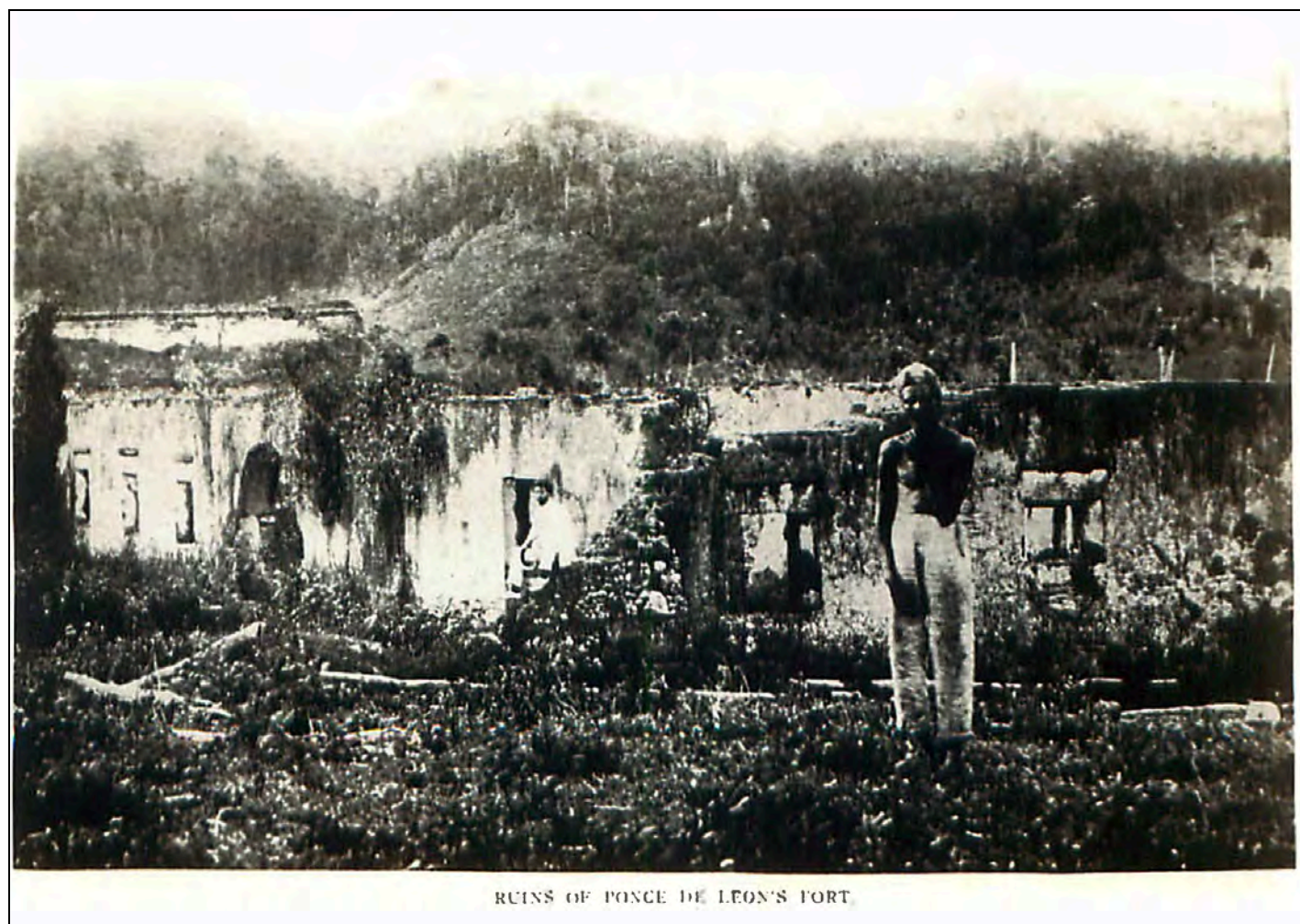


Fig. 3-D. (Wheeler 1899)

The Possible Urban Layout of Caparra

Once the specific historic cartography of the site is put aside as a reliable source of information concerning the possible layout of Caparra, special attention is given to the only remaining structure of the settlement: Ponce de León's stronghouse. The original location, orientation and scale of the structure provides data as to the possible layout of the settlement. Ponce de León's house

was built out of mud walls called "tapias". In his written account to Governor Ovando he describes it as follows:

Hice una casa mediana, con su terrado e pretil y almenas, y su barrera delante de la puerta y toda encalada de dentro y de fuera, de alter de siete tapias en alto con pretil y almenas [Caro Costas 1972:77].

This general description resembles a drawing of another medieval-type strong house published by Zapatero (1978:98) (Fig. 4-D).

Adolfo de Hostos (1938) concluded, that the primitive Ponce de León *tapia* house should have been the northern section of the structure found during his excavations. This original structure was then successively enlarged and improved using stone materials up to the year 1512. The fact that on July 14, 1519 a "vecino" of Caparra declared that "seven years ago" (1512) he was working with stone materials in Ponce de León's house at Caparra, confirms de Hostos' conclusion.

According to the 1938 archaeological findings by de Hostos, the main facade of the structure was facing West. This fact suggests that the community open space or plaza of Caparra should have been in front of this landmark structure. Consequently, the plaza should have had at least the same length of the structure, that is to say, 162 feet long (Fig. 5-D).

The definitive proof of the existence of a plaza at Caparra is confirmed on an appeal court trial held in 1512, when King Ferdinand returned the ownership of a house to a *vecino*. Such house was said to be located "at the plaza of the Villa". The community church was located also in front of the plaza.

This plaza probably had a rectangular or square form according to the traditional examples utilized at medieval new towns in Spain or similar to the future plazas at San Juan. It is important to mention that San Juan's layout was apparently traced following the already acquired property lines at Caparra.

The plaza at Caparra was the gathering place of the *vecinos* on public events like Sunday mass, the frequent public auctions, and public market. It also was the gathering place during the frequent gold smelting periods when the dispersed population of the region came to the villa. In addition, one has to consider that the immediate surroundings of the village remained covered by dense tropical forests. Not many other clear open spaces must have been in existence.

With these facts in mind, the first step to try to determine Caparra's layout, was to examine the earliest available aerial photos taken previous to the massive construction in the area during the 1950's-70's.

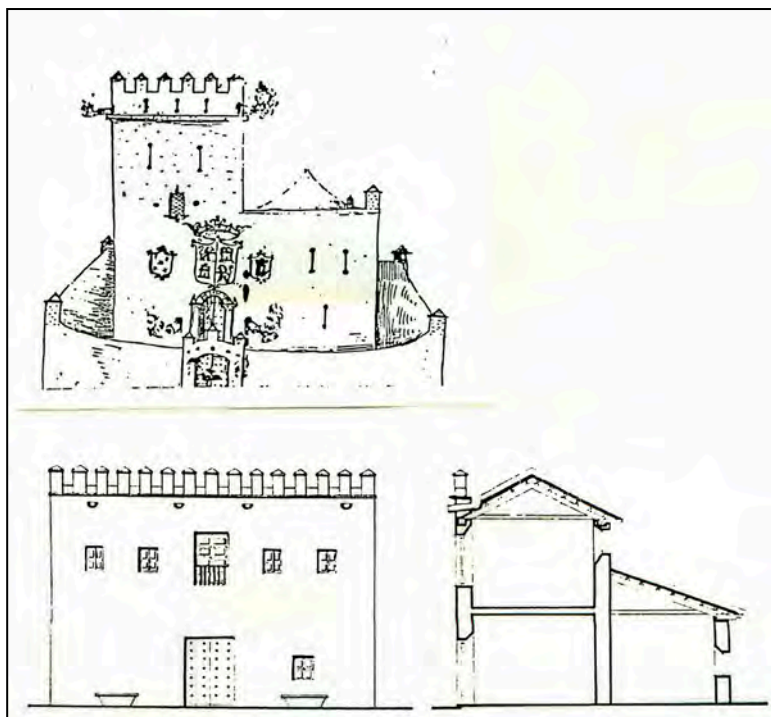


Fig. 4-D. Stronghouse at Santa Marta: 1572 and Royal House at Santa Fe: 1492. Examples of contemporary stronghouses built by Ponce de León in Caparra. (Zapatero 1978)

Other Structures in Caparra

Besides Ponce de León's house, there were in Caparra a significant number of other structures. Gathering information from different sources, one can estimate the number and characteristics of the structures that were built at Caparra from 1508 to around 1519.

Without a solid economic basis, Caparra had an unstable existence. Depending mostly on the economic activities generated by a non-free Indian labor force, and unstable gold smelting seasons, dwelling structures were constructed with non-durable materials. Moreover, most of these dwellings were only temporarily occupied by their owners, who were engaged in gold-searching expeditions elsewhere on the island.

These houses were called *bohios* and were adopted and subsequently adapted by the Spaniards from the native Taino population. In fact, the Indians were utilized as the labor force on their construction.

At Caparra, some of these *bohios* were of reinforced wooden construction with wooden doors and windows (Fig. 5-D). By 1513, there must have been a minimum of 35 of these structures. On that year the Indians attacked the village, burning the church and 29 "bohios". The witnesses declared that the Indians destroyed part of the town, including the church.

In addition to the dwellings, the church, and the solid *tapia* and stone structure owned by Ponce de León, there were at Caparra, other public structures sheltering diverse uses. There is evidence of the existence of relatively large storage structures for salt, arms, tools, a smelting house with a brick forge, a blacksmith shop, several food warehouses, various water wells in addition to pig-yards, poultry-yards, stockyards, and timber-yards. Admittedly, some of these uses were sheltered at Ponce de León's house itself. A cemetery must also have been located near the church, somewhere around the public plaza.

On various occasions, Indian labor forces were allocated for the construction of a public hospital, although its construction is still not confirmed. On the other hand, the existence of a jail is a more probable certainty.

The documented existence of persons with occupations such as apothecaries, butchers, woodcutters, muleteer, cart drivers, merchants, blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, well-builders, swine keepers, bakers, and stone cutters, leads one to suggest that at least some of them must have had small shops to practice their occupations. In addition, one has to keep in mind that the city and island-wide government officials were living in Caparra.

None of the before mentioned structures, except for Ponce de León's house, was of solid construction. A growing movement to relocate the settlement gained force specially during the periods when Ponce de León was not in charge of the government. As early as 1511, only three years after its founding date, there is evidence that some *vecinos* of Caparra were contemplating its relocation to a better site. Since then, a great animosity on the relocation issue is evidenced. Consequently, most of the *vecinos* never initiated the construction of permanent structures on the site.

Finally, on July 13 and 14, 1519, Rodrigo de Figueroa, the new Governor of "The Indies" appointed by King Carlos V, gathered the city officials and some of the *vecinos* of Caparra and listened to their opinions. Ponce de León and another twelve persons presented their points of view in this public hearing. The resulting written document constitutes the best available source describing the city of Caparra, as well as the proposed site for San Juan (see text in Colección de Documentos Inéditos, 1881:457-526).

The strongest arguments in favor of the relocation were the excessive transportation costs of the merchandise from the port to the city, as well as the unhealthy characteristics of the site. All the witnesses, except Ponce de León, voted in favor of the move. On November 12, 1519, Figueroa wrote to Carlos V from the city of Santo Domingo, favoring the transfer. The letter was accompanied by the illustrated map (Fig. 1-D).

The transfer of the city began to take place immediately and the city of San Juan was developed on the new site. Soon Caparra, the first European urban center in Puerto Rico, became a "ghost town", its exact site disappearing from public memory. It was not until 1938 that the true ruins of the site were confirmed by de Hostos' archaeological survey.

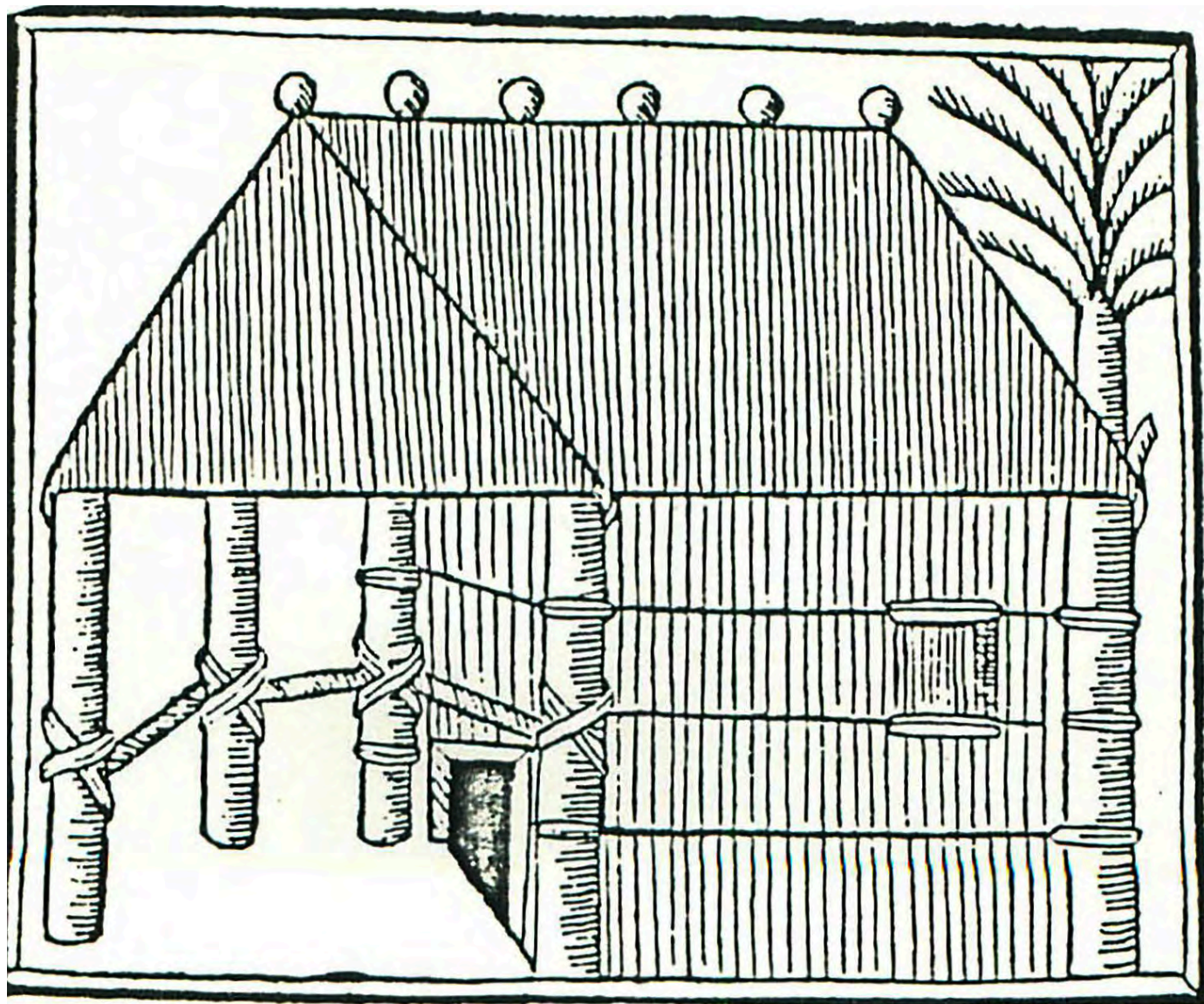
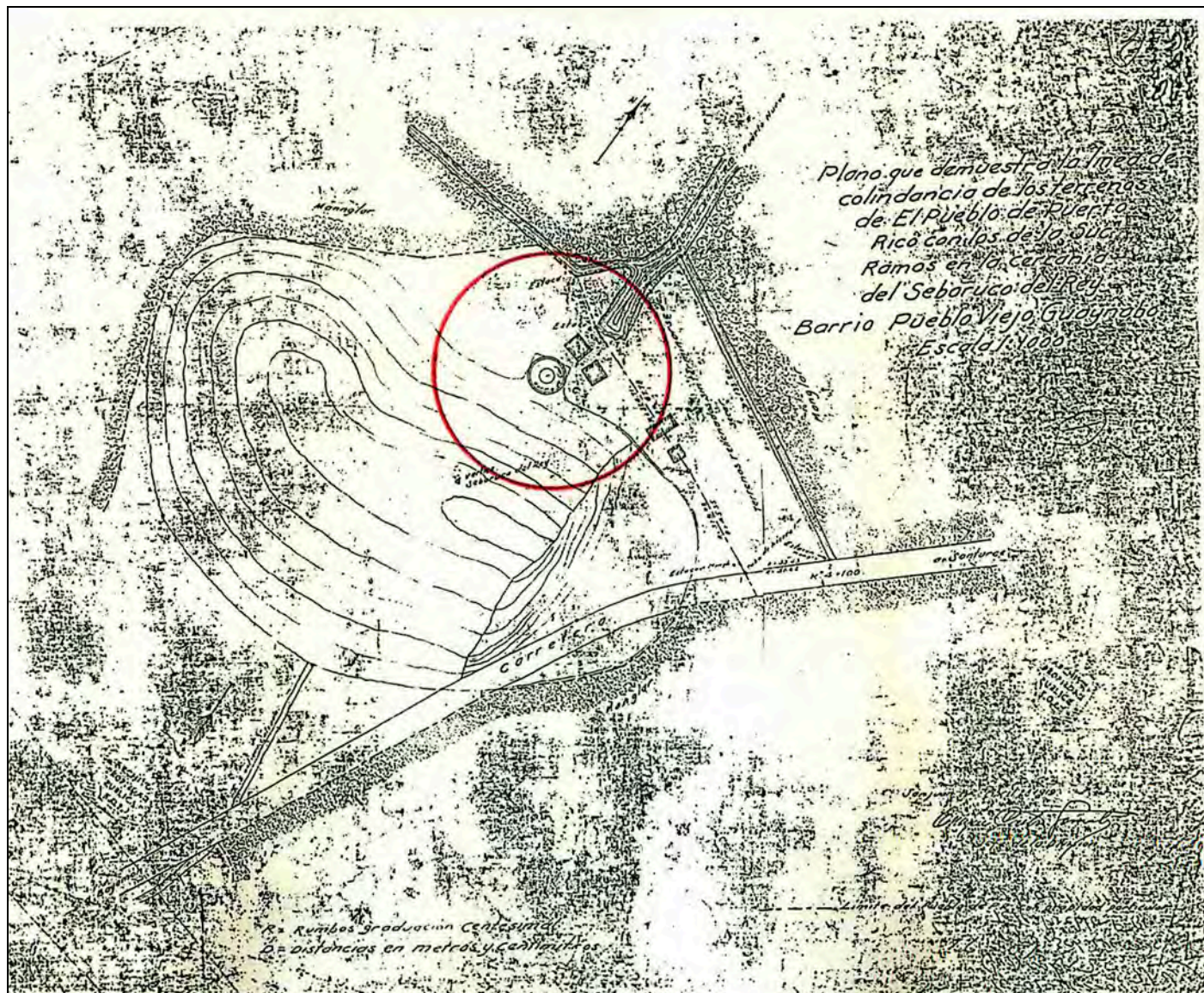


Fig. 5-D. Bohio construction. (Pantel et. al. 1986)

SECTION E: VILLA CAPARRA: THE SETTLEMENT THAT TIME FORGOT



Early 20th century plan showing Spanish colonial lime kiln in general area of Pueblo Viejo. (Archives of the Department of Transportation and Public Works)

VILLA CAPARRA: THE SETTLEMENT THAT TIME FORGOT

Initial Concerns

Located on a small lot which faces Highway #2 (also known as *carretera militar* or Kennedy Avenue) at approximately Km. 6.6 on the stretch from Santurce to Bayamón, lie the purported ruins of the *Villa de Caparra*. Caparra was the location of the first Spanish settlement on the island of Puerto Rico.

Housed in a modern, small building on the northern section of the site is the *Museo de la Conquista y Colonización de Puerto Rico*. Inside, the visitor can examine some of the material excavated from the site during previous archaeological work as well as a small sample of objects pertaining to the black and Indian heritage. According to the Museum's brochure, together with the white Spanish race, these two groups of people were to form Puerto Rican society.

Even though these "ruins" lie at the edge of such a busy thoroughfare, nothing on the site attracts much attention as should a place of such significance. If these are in reality the remains of the first Spanish settlement in Puerto Rico, as was determined in 1938, then very little is being done to call the attention of tourists, local or international. During an unplanned visit to the site, the awkward location of the ruins on the lot and the curious, cement-like mortar that held the stones of the low walls together was noticed. The regular manner in which these "antique" building materials were held together did not seem so old (16th century) (Fig. 1-E). Also, the ruins seemed located at a 90 degree angle to Highway PR-#2 (Fig. 2-E), while on the drawings published in the De Hostos report (of the 1930's excavation of the site) (Fig. 3-E), the ruins were clearly at an angle to the road. It was then determined, that historical investigation and additional archaeological excavations seemed to be the best solution to the doubts or questions raised during the visit.

As we were to find out as soon as we began our research, time and historical circumstance were to fiercely struggle to allow for the disappearance of Villa Caparra. Very little historical information is available and the sources found, are not easily accessible. It was also very frustrating to note during the historic investigations carried out for this project, that a "blackout period" or "black hole" existed in the government files of Puerto Rico spanning from the late 1930's to the mid 1950's. Hardly any maps, photographs or information is available for this time frame. Two possible reasons for this could have been the Second World War and the founding of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (*Estado Libre Asociado* [E.L.A.]), both major events taking place during these dates. Lack of employees in these departments during the War and the transfer, loss and possible destruction of some of the documents and archives during the transfer from the U.S. government to the newly formed E.L.A. are believed to be valid reasons.

General considerations which needed to be addressed in order to arrive at some logical explanations to the site of Villa Caparra were:

How the present identified ruins were determined to be the remains of Ponce de León's stronghold of the 16th century settlement known as Caparra?

Why was the construction of Highway PR-#2 allowed to cut these historical remains in half?

Why has history and time forgotten the original location of Villa Caparra and why has Ponce de León's stronghold been confused with the remains of so many different structures?

Did the excavations directed by don Adolfo de Hostos during the 1930's find the true location of *La Ciudad de Puerto Rico* (Caparra)?

and finally,

If Villa Caparra was indeed found in the decade of the 30's, why has it been neglected and forgotten again?



Fig. 1-E (a). General view of present site.



Fig. 1-E (b). Cement-like mortar that holds "stones" together.



Descriptions of the Area

In the very scarce cartographic and historical accounts available for the 16th and 17th century, the "Barrio de Pueblo Viejo" and surrounding land, (the general area where the present identified site lies), is described as undesirable and far from the port or bay. The main complaints were the dampness and poor ventilation, major reasons for the final moving of the settlement to the islet of San Juan. Nevertheless, by the 19th century, and as recently as 1914, the land had somewhat improved (naturally or by the actions of man), because although *manglares* or mangrove covered large sections of the land, large agricultural patches begin to appear on the maps (Fig. 4-E) .

... the region transversed by the survey from Pueblo Viejo to Bayamón is a densely populated agricultural zone, abounding in fruit plantations and valuable pasture and cane lands (AGPR - O.P., Carreteras, cj. 2160, leg.58B).

Nonetheless, mention is made that some of the land lay on a flood plain.

When the present site of Caparra is found in 1936, it is described as located at the edge of Highway PR-#2 on agricultural land owned by cattleman, *ganadero*, Sr. Mercedes Ojea. Architect and civil engineer Rafael del Valle Zeno, member of the Action Committee on the Caparra Investigations, states in his report, that on this land,

...se cosecharon muchos 'quintales de caña' o 'mazos de yerba elefante' y dejando de estos cultivos el rastro mostrado en 'bancoy surco' que hoy ensña su superficie [del Valle Zeno 1937: 5].

Aerial photographs for this time frame indicate dry land and various streams and rivers in the immediate vicinity.

By the late 1930's, the large farmlands in the area were being sub-divided into urban lots, as can be seen in Figs. 5-E and 6-E which are enlargements of aerial photographs of 1937 and 1938. These subdivisions were mainly taking place on the south edge of the road. A rare plan of 1942 shows individual lot ownerships and lot sizes (Fig. 12-E). The 1951 aerial photograph (Fig. 7-E) clearly depicts the density and urban growth of the area by then. One notable feature in the 1951 view is the obvious change in orientation of the ruins, which now appear at 90 degrees to the roadway. This brings about our other initial concern: Were the ruins found in 1936 relocated? Detailed studies of aerial photographs from 1937, 1938 and 1951 proved this to be true. Additional corroborating evidence was found in the map published by de Hostos (de Hostos, 1938:113) (Fig. 3-E) and the references found in Eng. del Valle Zeno's report (del Valle Zeno 1937:6) which clearly indicate the location of the excavated ruins and foundations to be at NS 63 degrees, 46 minutes NE of the centerline of Highway PR-#2 (Fig. 8-E). In no way were the ruins found as they appear today, which is perpendicular to the highway (Fig. 9-E). Research on the construction of *carretera* No. 2 was deemed indispensable since documents on the road construction in this sector could have mentioned the encounter of old ruins which had to be destroyed for the road construction project. No such mention was found. Nevertheless, interesting information on other aspects of the road projects was discovered.

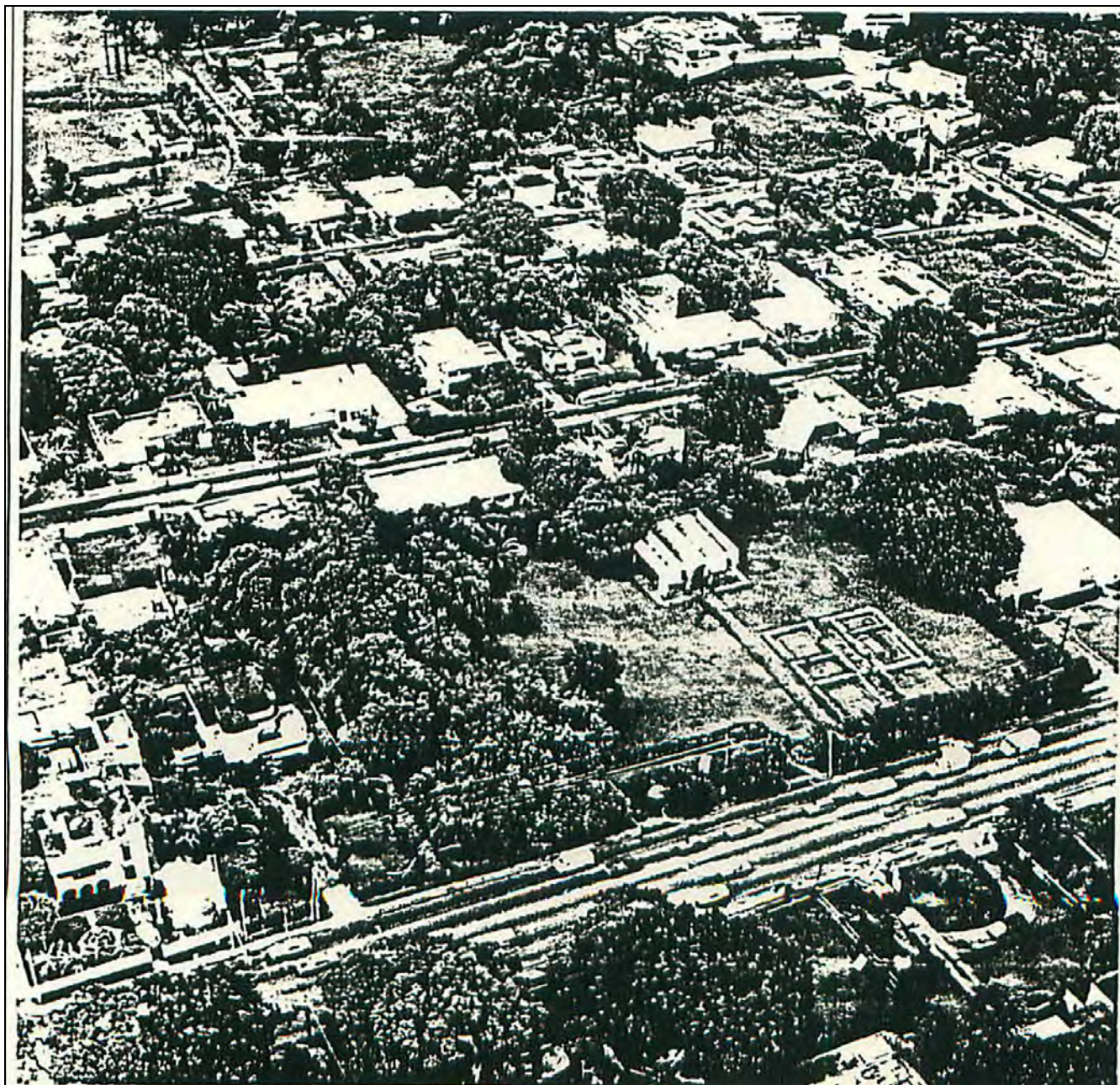


Fig. 2-E. Aerial view of the present site of Caparra and Carr. No. 2 (Pantel 1978)

Highway and Road Projects

Highways 1, 2 and 3 were all synonymously known as the *carreteras militares* or military roads because in fact sections of them were constructed by the United States government for military purposes during the First World War. The construction of highway No.2 that is of concern to this project, is described in the *Obras Publicas* documents as the Section from Pueblo Viejo to Bayamon, from Km. 6.44 to Km. 11.91. The main reason for the construction of this section of the road was to complete the land connection from San Juan to Bayamon and nearby towns. At this time, 1915, residents of this area could only reach the capital city through the use of the ferry boat at Cataño, making the trip long and inconvenient. In some of the documents examined, these reasons are clearly stated:

...ventajas que se obtendran al conectar a San Juan directamente con ella [porcion existente anterior de la carretera no. 2] por media de una via terrestre...para evitar inconveniente de atravesar Bahia...nuevo trazado favorece grandemente industria existe en la región (AGPR- O.P., Carreteras, cj. 2160, leg. 58B).

For this section, comprising 5.5 kms. of macadamized road, the Legislative Assembly approved \$55,000.00 on March 11, 1915. The project was to be completed in six months. The original width of the road was specified as 8 meters or 26'-3" approximately, with two traffic lanes and culverts on each side.

In the month of March, 1938, the *Comite de Acción de las Investigaciones de Caparra* determined that the ruins they had been researching and excavating during 1937 were in fact the true remains of Ponce de León's stronghold. Nevertheless, this historical site was to be finally destroyed by two other highway projects on the stretch of road bordering the ruins.

One of the road-widening proposals was planned circa 1942, only four years after the importance of the site had been made public. This project widened the roadway towards the North. One reason for this could have been that most of the land in that area was still undeveloped (see Figs. 5-E and 6-E). The prominent walls found above ground were on this side of the "carretera". The proposed added width was 7 to 8 meters which is equal to 23 - 26 feet or two traffic lanes. De Hostos' constant pleas with pertinent governmental agencies for the protection of the exposed ruins proved fruitless. The actual work took place sometime before the aerial photograph of 1951. The second project, circa 1963, added one more traffic lane to the existing four lane highway (a width of 4 meters which is equal to 12 - 13 feet). This time the expansion took place towards the South, where the remains of sets of foundation walls were found beneath the surface. (Figs. 3-E, 6-E, and 10-E).

To date, it has been impossible to find any written documentation or justification as to the reasons these projects were permitted to affect ruins of such importance in such an adverse manner. Nonetheless, alternatives were found to have been considered at the time, and that the monies (\$8,000.00) that were assigned by the Legislature to purchase the land, included the cost of the deviation of the road in order to expose the remains thought to still exist beneath the original stretch of road constructed in 1915 (del Valle Zeno 1937: Apéndice) (Fig. 11-E).

One of the alternatives considered can be seen in the 1942 Department of the Interior Plan and in correspondence found in de Hostos' personal files (Figs. 12-E, 13-E and 14-E). Some of these letters state that the pertinent agencies will try to avoid the destruction of the ruins. The 1942 proposal (Fig.12-E) deviated the widening of the road to behind (to the North of) the ruins, allowing these to remain *in situ*, protected, highly visible and most important of all, guaranteeing their integrity. It has been concluded that because it was wartime, public funds were scarce (the road deviation and the construction of a commemorative park would have definitely cost more than the straight widening that actually took place) and the need of road expansion (again for military mobility purposes) proved to be of greater importance than the saving of the ruins. Convenience and progress went above and beyond the protection of the purported site where the historical roots of Puerto Rican society lay. No excuse is valid for the continuous destruction of the site.

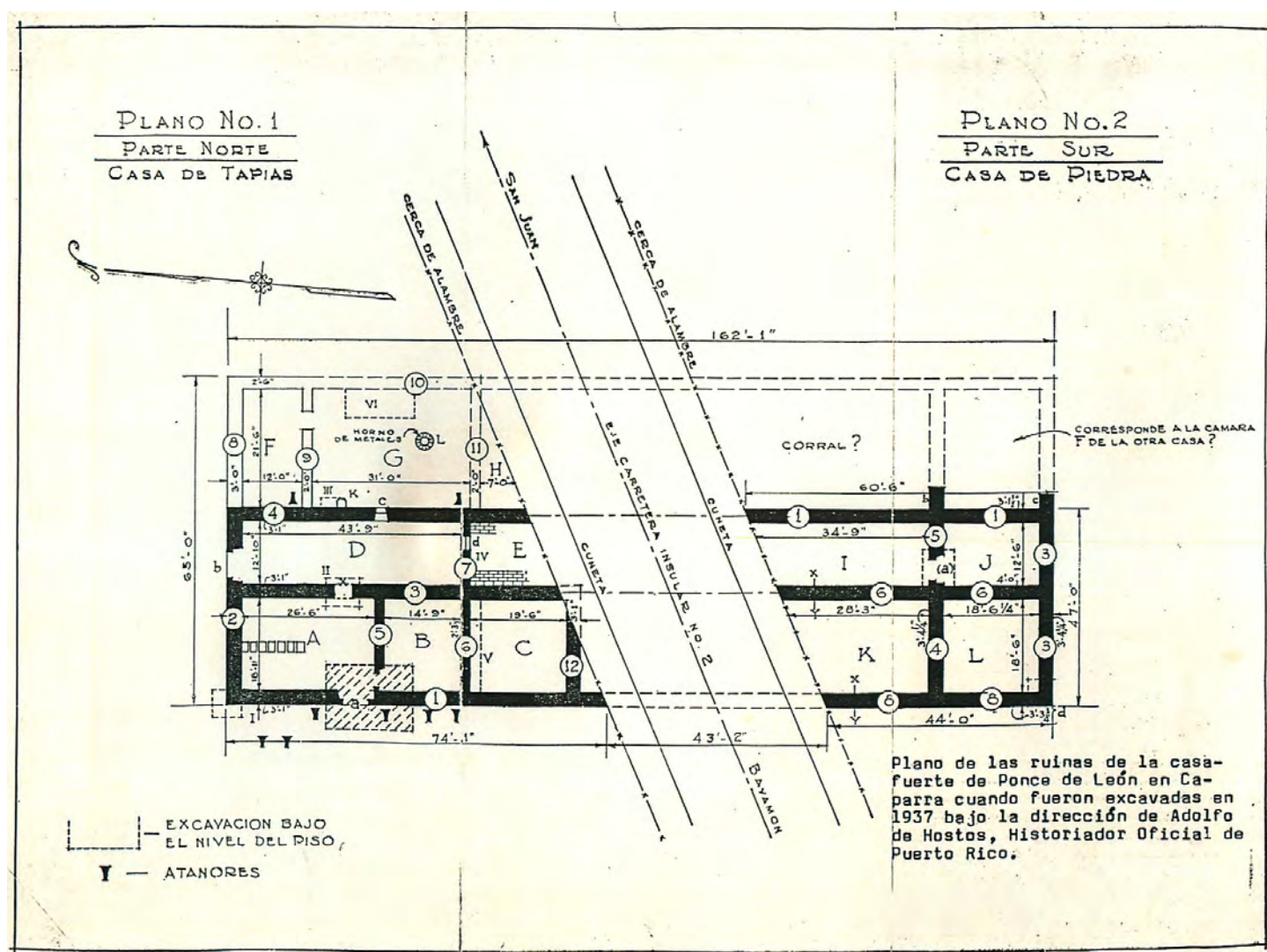


Fig. 3-E. (de Hostos 1938)

Relocation of the Ruins

The 1940's road-widening project was to destroy a large section (about 40%) of the prominent standing walls on the North side (Fig. 15-E). It appears as though at some time during the 40's, it was decided that since so much was going to be destroyed anyway, the logical way to proceed was to demolish all the structures on both North and Southsides (Fig. 10-E). The northern part of the ruins were of *tapia* (mud-wall) construction (Fig. 16-E) and the southern part of the ruins were of stone (Fig. 17-E). It was apparently concluded that after the lot was finally bought (1948) they could then "reconstruct" the ruins on the North side of the highway. Of course, it was an easier path to follow; that is demolish all, and replace with new construction. Some people that were interviewed still remember the "disassembly" of the structures in order for them to be reconstructed as faithfully as possible. This is confusing because *tapia* or mud-wall construction is basically held together by a thick coat of plaster; interior and exterior. The plaster helps maintain a somewhat controlled moisture level of the mud-wall mixture itself. Once the plaster is removed, or falls off, the wall core construction dries out, rapidly becoming powder. Even if the desire was present, it would have been nearly impossible to relocate the original *tapia* walls on the North side of the road without their coming apart and crumbling. All this

brings about other doubts and unsolved puzzles. The "stone house" section of the stronghouse was the enlargement or expansion of the original portion of the house constructed of *tapias* or mud-wall,

...la casa de piedra se construyó junto a la de tapias, unida a ésta por sus paredes principales, a manera de una espléndida adición a la primera casa,... (de Hostos, 1938: 33- 34) (Fig. 18-E).

See Fig. 3-E where de Hostos shows this graphically. According to the archaeological excavations of 1937, the foundations of the stone house were discovered on the South side of Highway 12 (Fig. 19-E). The reconstructed ruins that exist today on the North lot are of stone (Fig. 20-E).

Were the mud-brick walls on the North lot totally destroyed and discarded?

Was a totally fictitious reconstruction of stone-like appearance and altered wall height later put together on this lot? (Fig. 21-E)

Were even the wrong historic building materials used?

In addition, we must accept another great loss which was that of the original construction technology, which ceased to exist when the original fabric was destroyed. No apparent reason justifies the alteration in the cardinal orientation of the ruins to that of 90 degrees to the highway. We may speculate on the possibility that during the moving/reconstruction of the ruins, "modern urban concepts" were employed, which included setting the historic reconstruction in an orderly fashion within the limited new site which was purchased (Fig. 9-E).

Today, on a 4,980 sq. mts. lot purchased from Juan Martinez Vela and José Alvarez on November 12, 1948, a very general interpretation of the stronghouse of Juan Ponce de León stands.

What presently exists on the site was carefully recorded during the month of August 1987 and drawn to scale. These measurements were compared with the historic documentation. Fig. 10-E shows the superimposition of the ruins excavated in 1937 (40 years before) on the present "ruins". Without a doubt, through precise historically documented evidence, it can be seen that the site of the stronghouse has been extensively altered, having completely lost its integrity due to three highway projects. The Commemorative Park referred to in all the 1930's documents was never built, and the sad site awaits any attention owed to it.

The brochure given at the present Museum states that the ruins were again abandoned (from the late 1940's when they were moved) until 1958 when the property was transferred to the then recently founded Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. Restoration of the "historic" ruins was undertaken at that time.

Settlement Location Controversy

A very interesting aspect of studying Villa Caparra is the amount of contradiction involved in the information available, and the fact that so few primary sources mention a settlement of such importance. It was, after all, the first settlement for Spain and Christianity on a new land (island in this case). Was the actual condition of this town so undesirable that the first Spanish colonizers made conscious efforts to allow this town to disappear? It is known historically that most of the building materials from the standing structures in the town were disassembled and what was salvageable was taken to the islet of San Juan for reuse during the settlement's relocation. But, certain aspects are still very puzzling:

Why were so few maps made of this town which was inhabited for more than 12 years?

Why so few even descriptive accounts?

Why, if initially located so convenient in proximity to gold mines and good agricultural land, did no one stay behind?

From 1521 (the date the city moved to the islet of San Juan) to the 1930's (approximately 400 years) not much mention is made

of the old settlement, except for descriptions such as those given by Torres Vargas (Tapia 1970:543) during the 17th century. Throughout the years (mainly based on old accounts, word of mouth, popular belief and legend), different sets of ruins are identified as those of the *Casa Fuerte de Ponce de León en la Antigua Villa de Caparra*. By the late 19th century, some maps and photographs were identifying the ruins of the lost city in the general area of Pueblo Viejo; one common denominator being in the mention that these were located near the train tracks that led from San Juan to Bayamón (de Hostos 1937:5). The present route of Roosevelt Avenue and the entrance road to Fort Buchanan were superimposed over the original French Railroad lines.

Three photographic views of Caparra are published before the 1930's excavations:

Fig. 22-E shows the 1899 version identified as "Ruins of Ponce de León's fort" (Wheeler 1899)

Fig. 23-E shows the 1900 version which is identified as *Ruinas de una Iglesia en Pueblo Viejo (Departamento de la Guerra, Censo de Puerto Rico 1899)*

Fig. 24-E shows the 1923 version identified as "Ruinas de Caparra. Iglesia de San Juan Bautista (1511). One of the Oldest towns in America (1508)." (Fernandez Garcia 1923)

The first two photographs (Figs. 22-E and 23-E) pertain to the same structure. Although not identified positively, these ruins are said to have belonged to an old *hacienda* or *ingenio* in the general area of the Antigua Barrio de Pueblo Viejo. The third photograph (Fig. 24-E) has been identified as *Hermita del Plantaje*, ruins which, although not as complete, still exist near the town of Bayamón.

Other historical evidence was found in aerial photographs of 1937 and 1938 (*Autoridad de Carreteras, Oficina de Fotogrametria*). The photographic enlargements are shown on Figs. 5-E and 6-E. These views clearly show the mound and ruins that were excavated by don Adolfo de Hostos. But is this the real site of Villa Caparra? Careful analysis of the cartographic data together with historical descriptions and aerial photographs have only created more confusion and raised more questions. The researched historical material constantly contradicts itself. Two maps dated 1884 (Fig. 25-E) and 1887 (Fig. 26-E) respectively, indicate the *Ermita de la Antigua Caparra* on the same place and with the same number of structures (six). Both maps show this group of buildings located on the edge of the road that leads to Guaynabo in the *Barrio de Pueblo Viejo Arriba* and near *Quebrada Margarita*. When this information is transposed to the aerial photograph of 1937 (Fig. 27-E) and to that of 1985 (Fig. 28-E) it locates the site of Villa Caparra to the northeast of the site excavated by de Hostos. The location indicated in the 19th century maps lies presently in the general area of the warehouses near the main entrance to Ft. Buchanan; approximately at the intersection of Highway #2 with state roads #19 (*antiguo camino a Guaynabo*) and state road #20. A reference made in de Hostos' *Investigaciones Históricas* clarifies some of the confusion, in a press release given out by the Department of the Interior on January 31, 1936 on the recently found site and before their excavations had begun.

...El profesor de Historia de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, señor Rafael W. Ramirez, hizo una exposición de hechos históricos ...y se refirió a unas antiguas ruinas que, desde hace años, son conocidas y visitadas en el antiguo camino vecinal de Guaynabo en donde en 1908, con motivo del Cuarto Centenario de don Juan Ponce de León, se celebró una fiesta conmemorativa (de Hostos 1937:9-10).

These should be the ones indicated in the 1884 and 1887 maps. The press release excerpts continue:

El ingeniero Rafael del Valle Zeno hizo notar con datos y planos probatorios, que el sitio en donde han aparecido ahora muros de 'tapia', 'azulejos', etc., se encuentra en lo que es hoy carretera a Bayamón construida en 1917 y en donde no había camino vecinal alguno y a 800 metros distantes de las antiguas ruinas conocidas [highlighting added] indicando ello la posibilidad de que se esta delante de un nuevo hallazgo histórico.

Could the 1898 and 1899 photographs of ruins (Figs. 22-E and 23-E) be this same site?

Was this site, believed to be Villa Caparra for so many years ever archaeologically excavated?

De Hostos excavations concluded that they had found Ponce de León's stronghold, but what about the city?

Could the presently known site be an isolated structure pertaining to the same historical period, but the city of Caparra still lie beneath the ground near the entrance to Ft. Buchanan?

Was the wrong site excavated in 1937?

No mention is ever made of other archaeological evidence in the present known site of Caparra, such as post molds of the wooden structures that were to have made up most of the settlement.

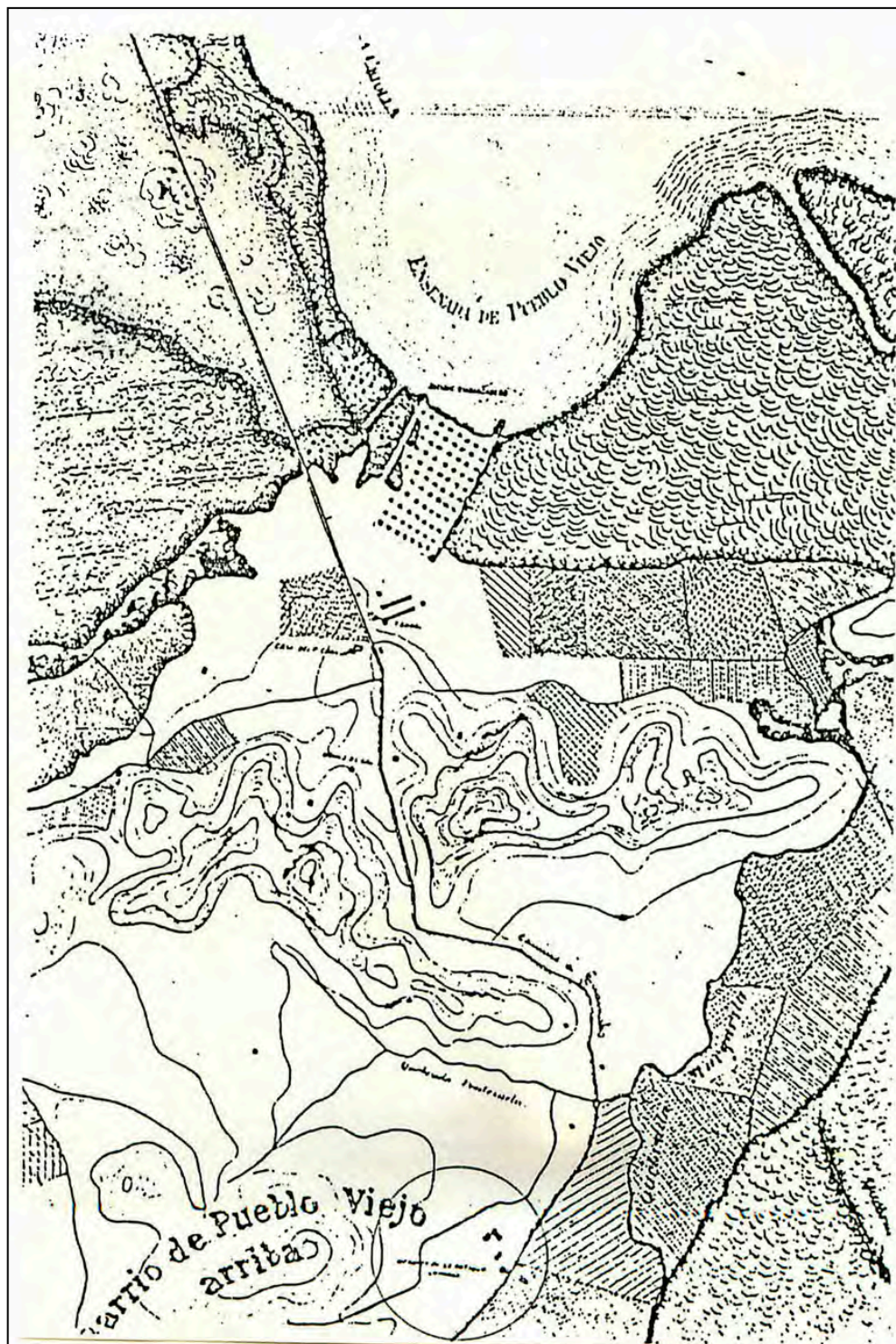


Fig. 4-E. Agricultural patches near the area of *Barrio de Pueblo Viejo Arriba*, 1887. (Sepulveda 1986)



Fig. 5-E. Enlargement of aerial photograph of Caparra area taken on 3-28-37. (*Autoridad de Carreteras, Oficina Fotogrametria*)

Adolfo de Hostos' Excavations and Research

Extraordinary information was brought to public attention due to the 1930's excavations. Specifically, the construction methods and technology of the remaining 16th century walls discovered was well documented in photographs and sketches (Figs. 16-E and 29-E). De Hostos made lengthy descriptions on how the Old World technology was adapted to the materials and climatic conditions encountered locally. Del Valle Zeno described in great detail the wall remains they found above ground:

Es evidente y bien definida la clase de construcción empleada en los muros de estas ruinas: 'tapia' ó tierra apisonada protegida de un enlucido ó 'encalado interior y exteriormente,' asentada en una solera ó lecho de piedra con esquineros de este mismo material (del Valle Zeno 1937:14-24).

De Hostos even went as far as to request the chemical analysis of the clays found in the mosaics, mortars and plasters of the stronghold remains (Figs. 30-E and 31-E). Only recently (10 to 15 years ago) has the chemical composition of historic construction materials been deemed imperative in the careful restoration or reconstruction of historic buildings (del Cueto de Pantel 1987). De Hostos' clear intent was to find out if the chemical composition of the materials he had unearthed matched those of other 16th century structures, in other words, he was looking for another way to date the site. His inexhaustible desire to gather as much historical evidence as possible is admirable and highly commendable at a date when old buildings were considered eye-sores and demolished without a second thought world-wide. Today, fifty years later, buildings said to be "restored" are still not as critically analyzed as they could and should be. Among de Hostos' personal files, a copy of his notes on *Les Travaux de Mars* by Manesson Mallet (Paris, 1672) was found. This indicates once more, de Hostos' desire to fully understand the construction technology at the time of Villa Caparra's establishment.

Villa Caparra's ideal or real (?) reconstruction was even studied by a group of students at the School of Architecture of the University of Puerto Rico. Fig.32-E shows what the 16th century settlement and stronghold might have looked like at the height of its glory as per their interpretation (Rosario 1984).

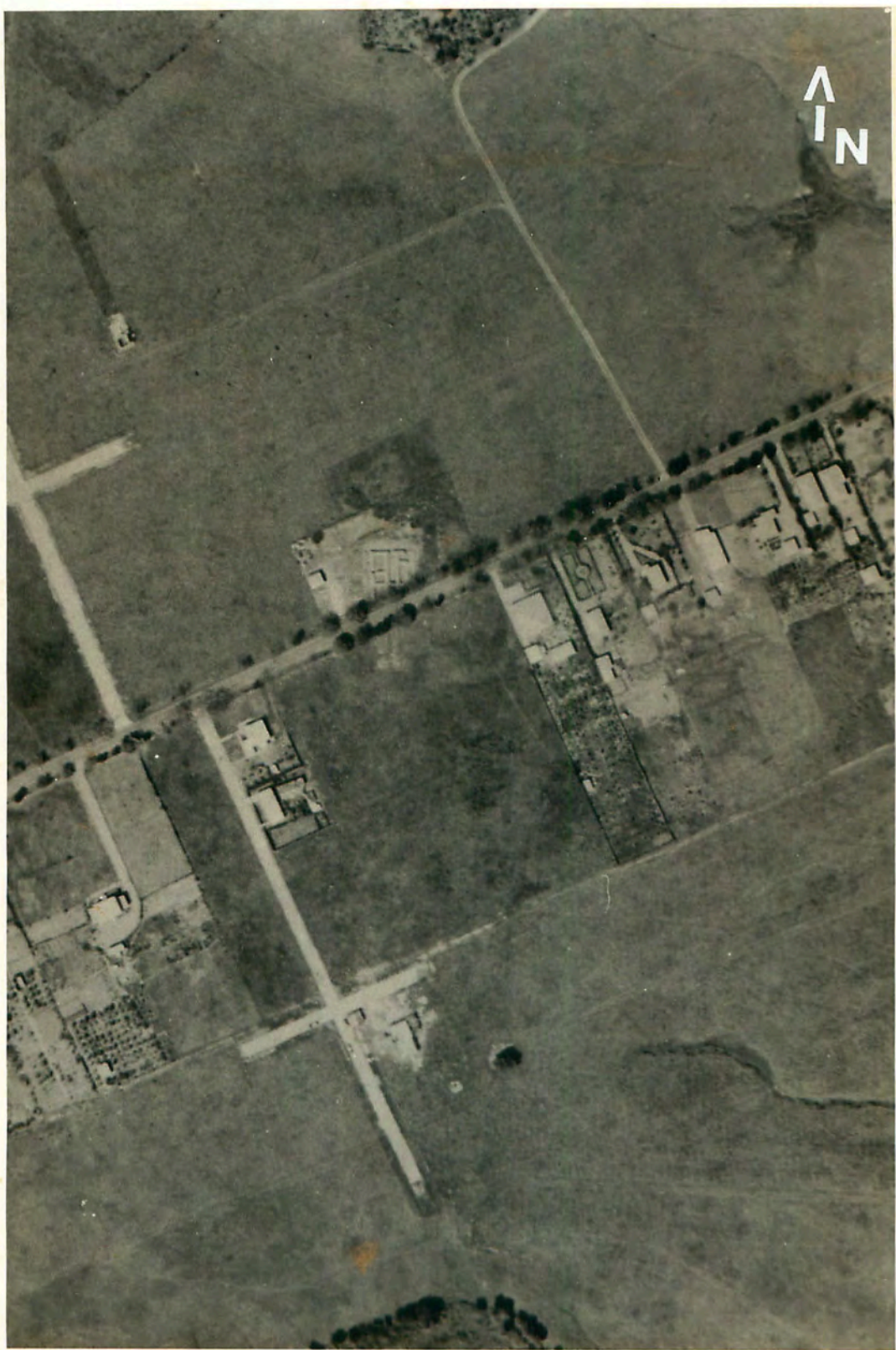


Fig. 6-E. Enlargement of aerial photograph taken ca. 1938 showing subdivision of farmlands into urban lots. Ruins of stronghouse can be seen as excavated during 1937, (Archives of the *Departamento de Recursos Naturales*)



Fig. 7-E. Enlargement of aerial photograph of Caparra area taken on ca. 1-10-51. (*Autoridad de Carreteras, Oficina Fotogrametria*)



Fig. 8-E. Plan made under the direction of Engineer Rafael del Valle Zeno after ruins were excavated in 1937. (de Hostos' personal files)

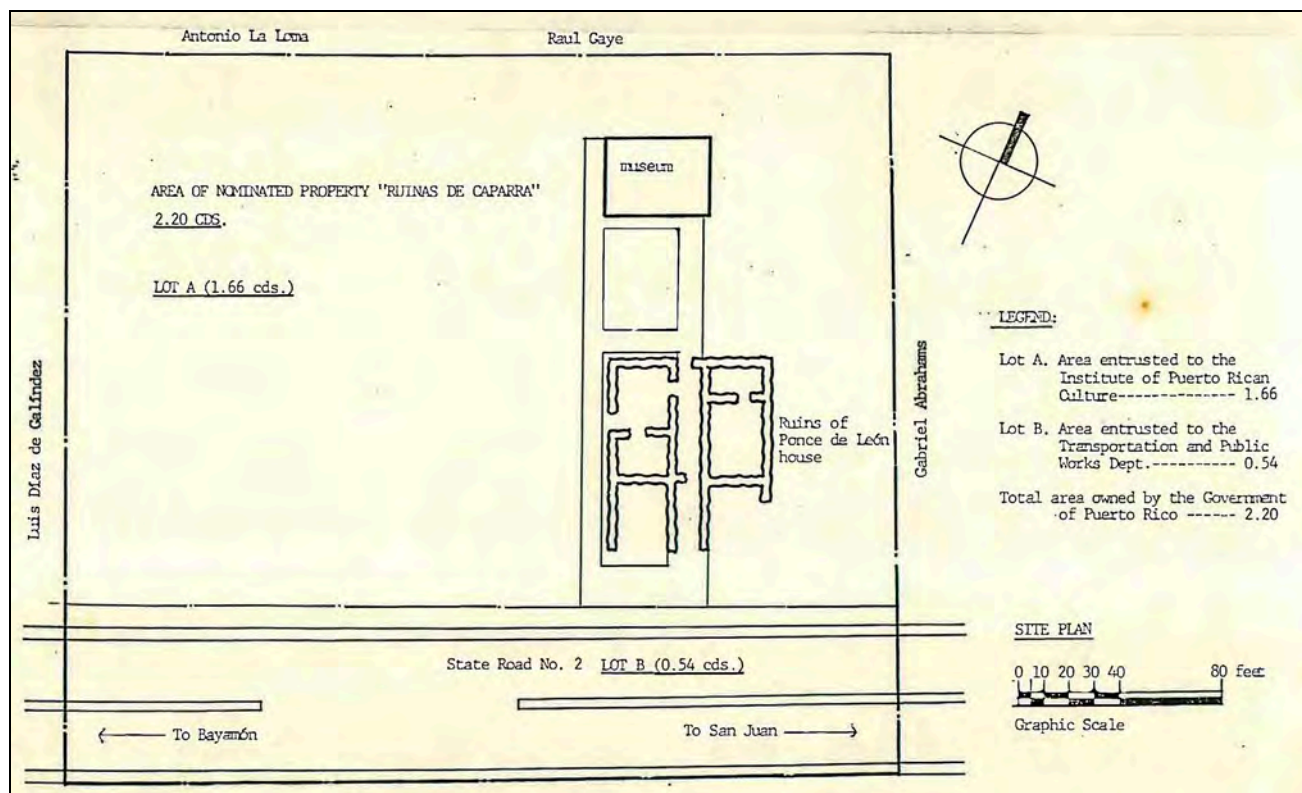


Fig. 9-E. Ruins as they appear presently, at 90 degree angle to PR-#2. (PR-SHPO nomination to the National Register of Historic Places 1984)

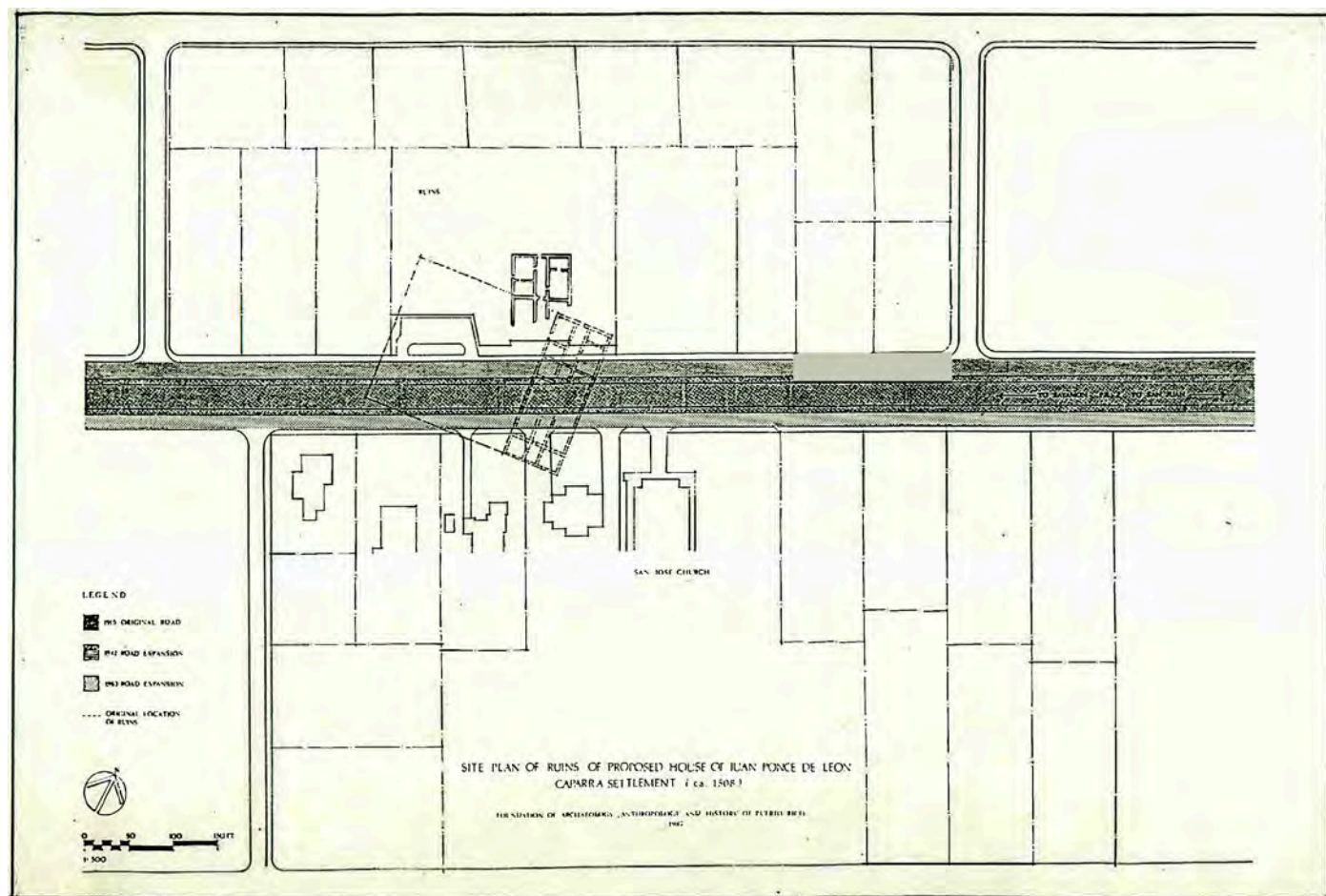


Fig. 10-E. Carretera No. 2 road construction and expansion projects from 1915 (center), ca. 1942 (top, north) to ca. 1963 (bottom south) on areas of Km. 6.6 from Santurce to Bayamon. (FAAH 1987) Dotted square area to the west indicates possible location and size of the main town plaza.

Condado, Santurce, P. R.
January 31, 1938.

Hon. José Enrique Colom
Commissioner of the Interior
San Juan, P. R.

My dear Mr. Colom:

I take pleasure in advising you that during a conversation which I had with Governor Winship yesterday, he expressed his urgent wish that the excavation of the Caparra ruins be continued without delay across the roadbed of the San Juan-Bayamón highway.

The Governor thinks that there will not be a lack of funds for carrying on this work and that it should not be necessary for us to wait for the opening of the coming Legislature.

The Governor wishes that estimates be prepared by your Department for tunnelling under the road so as to expose the foundations of the house or whatever remains of it - without having to detour the road as it had been originally planned. The Governor believes that this will be in itself an added attraction to those viewing the ruins in the future.

As Chairman of the Comité de Acción I hope that it will be possible to comply with the Governor's wishes in this respect and waiting your advice in the matter, I am,

Respectfully yours,

ADOLFO DE HOSTOS, Chairman
"Comité de Acción".

ADH:lms

Fig. 11-E. Letter from don Adolfo de Hostos to Mr. Colom, Commissioner of the Interior which speaks of excavations under existing Carretera no. 2 in 1938. (de Hostos' personal files)

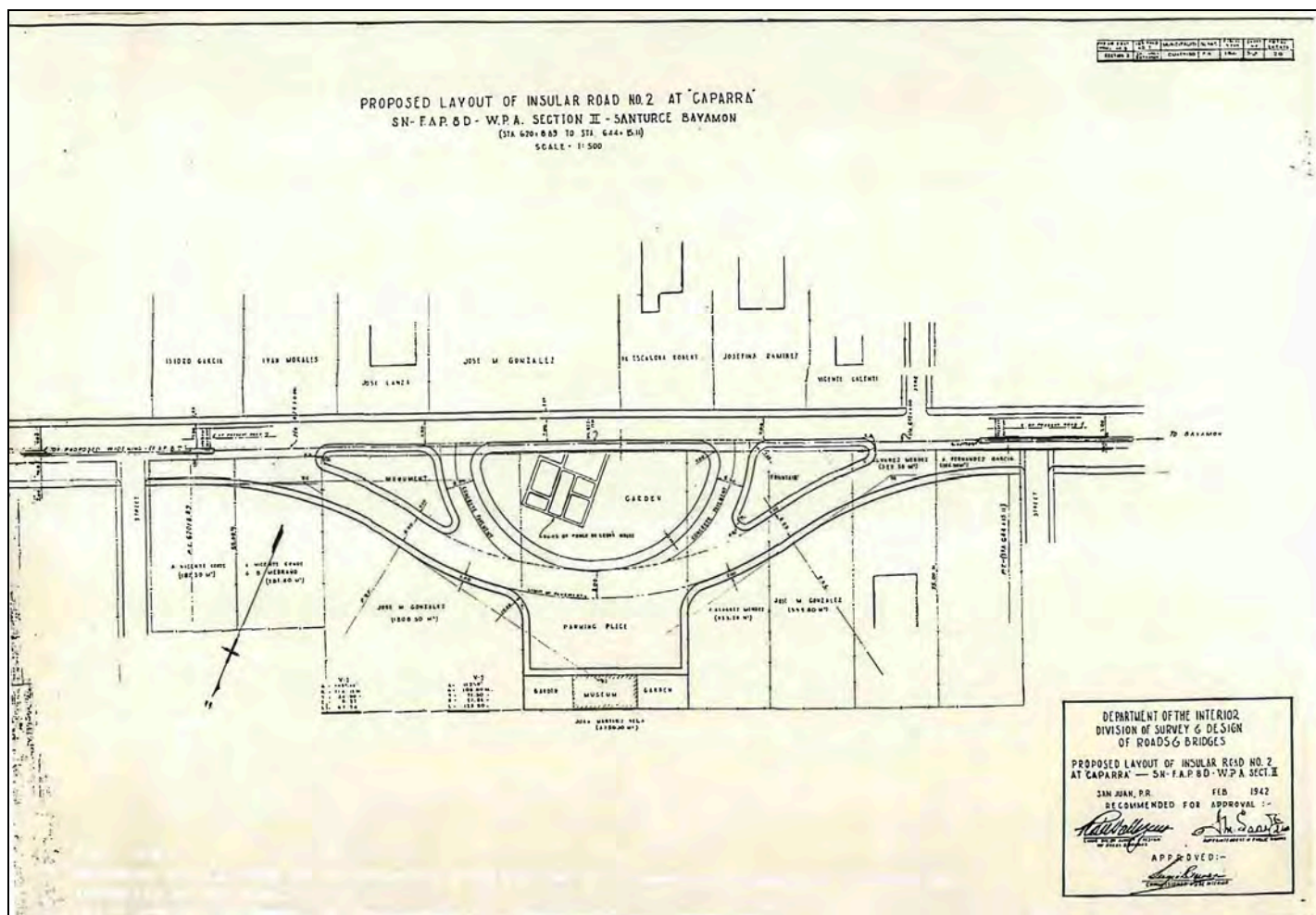


Fig. 12-E. Proposed Insular Road no. 2 deviation to allow for road expansion needed and maintain the integrity of the site. (Plan archives of *Departamento de Transportation y Obras Publicas*, Santurce)

HEADQUARTERS PUERTO RICAN DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO
August 11, 1941.

Mr. Adolfo de Hostos
New Haven, Connecticut

My dear Mr. de Hostos:

In reference to your letter of July 22, in which you request consideration for the preservation of Ponce de Leon ruins on the San Juan-Bayamon highway, I would like to advise you that the Insular Government is now reviewing plans for the widening and relocation of the highway.

A study is being made to so relocate the road as to preserve the ruins and at the same time to accentuate their historic interest.

Very truly yours,

Joe N. Dalton

JOE T. DALTON,
Lieut. Colonel, A. G. D.,
Adjutant General.

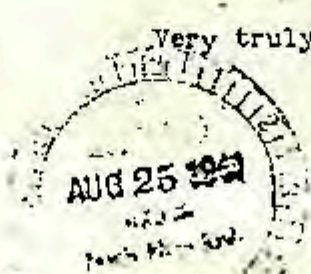


Fig. 13-E. Response to de Hostos' letter on relocation of PR #2 expansion and protection of Caparra ruins. (de Hostos' personal files)

*File
Caparra*

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

ADDRESS ONLY
THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

August 7, 1942.

Dr. Adolfo de Hostos,
Official Historian of Puerto Rico,
P. O. Box 3917,
Santurce, Puerto Rico.

Dear Dr. de Hostos:

I have received your letter of July 23, concerning the supposed ruins of the Caparra House, the home of Juan Ponce de Leon, which was built by this famous colonizer and explorer late in 1508.

The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments has not had an opportunity to consider the eligibility of the Caparra House. For the duration of the war it has been necessary for the National Park Service to suspend activities involving the investigation and acquisition of historic sites. We hope, however, that means may be found to protect and preserve the Caparra ruins from the destruction which threatens them as a result of the widening of the San Juan-Bayamon highway.

Your thoughtfulness in calling this matter to our attention is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Hillory A. Tolson
Hillory A. Tolson,
Acting Associate Director.

Fig. 14-E. Response to de Hostos' request for nomination and protection of Caparra ruins threatened by PR #2 expansion project. (de Hostos' personal files)



No. 22. La crujía D; gran sala probablemente destinada a uso público.



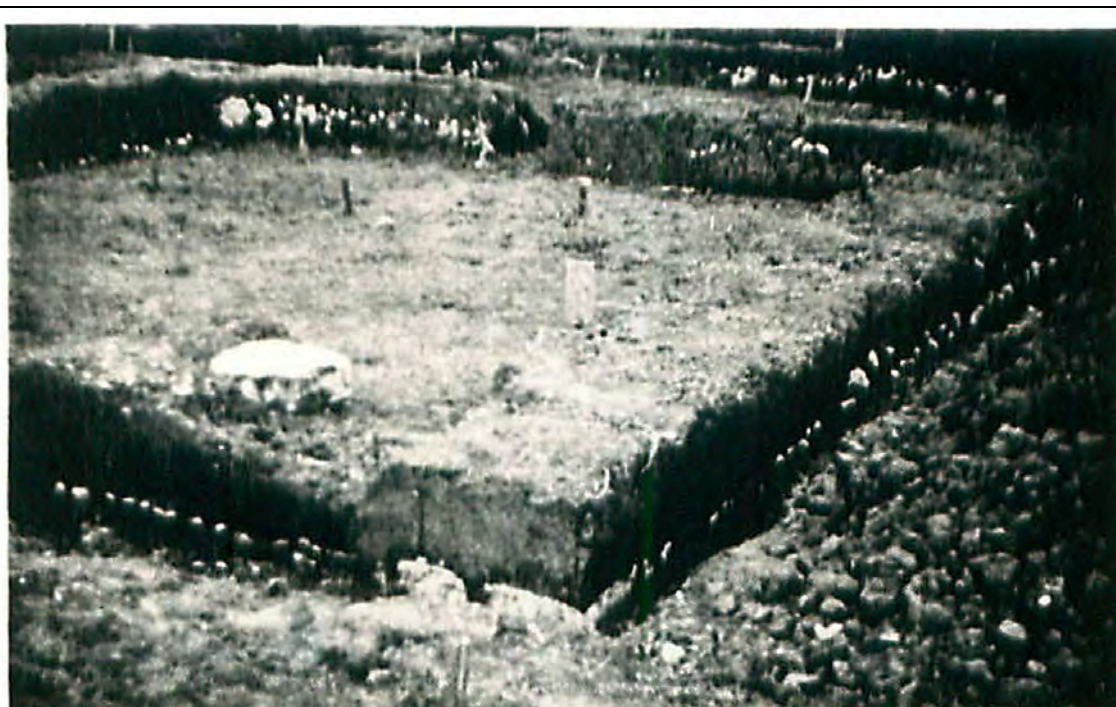
No. 24. Terminando la excavación de la crujía D.

Fig. 15-E. Prominent high walls of *tapia* (mud-wall) construction on the north side of the road, which were demolished. (de Hostos 1938)



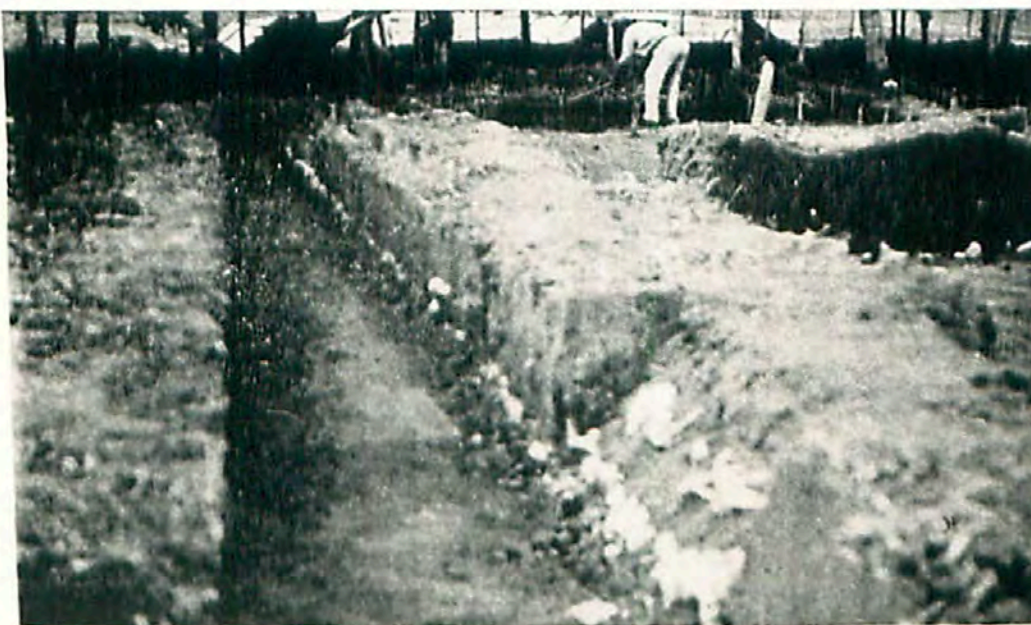
No. 7. Uno de los grandes pedazos del terrado o azotea del edificio (nótese el espesor de esta techumbre).

Fig. 16-E. Thickness of a piece of roof of mud, lime and straw or grass construction (*tapieria*). (de Hostos 1938)



No. 50 51 **CASA DE PIEDRA.**—La excavación de los vestigios de los muros exteriores revela perfectamente el cuadrilátero que formaba la casa con sus muros de partición. Nótese (primer término de la No. 50) las piedras angulares en el fondo de la esquina.

Fig. 17-E. *Casa de Piedra* foundations. Stone house section was found on south side of the road. *de Hostos 1938)



No. 48-49. CASA DE PIEDRA—Excavación de los restos del muro de la fachada de la Casa de Piedra. Nótese la línea de piedras (derecha) al fondo de la trinchera. La tierra comprendida entre los cortes es terreno natural. (Estos muros son prolongación de los de fachada de la Casa de Tapias.)

Fig. 18-E. Portion of "stone" house on south part of road. These walls are the prolongation of the walls on the north side. (de Hostos 1938)



Fig. 19-E. Foundation walls of stone house on the south side of the road. See roof-type covers for *tapia* walls on North or other side of the road (top of photograph). (de Hostos' personal files)



Fig. 20-E. The reconstructed ruins that exist today on the North lot are of stone construction.





Fig. 21-E. Existing wall reconstructions of altered wall-height.





Fig. 22-E. (Wheeler, 1899)



Fig. 23-E. *Ruinas de una Iglesia en Pueblo Viejo* (Censo de Puerto Rico 1899)



Fig. 24-E. (Fernandez Garcia 1923)

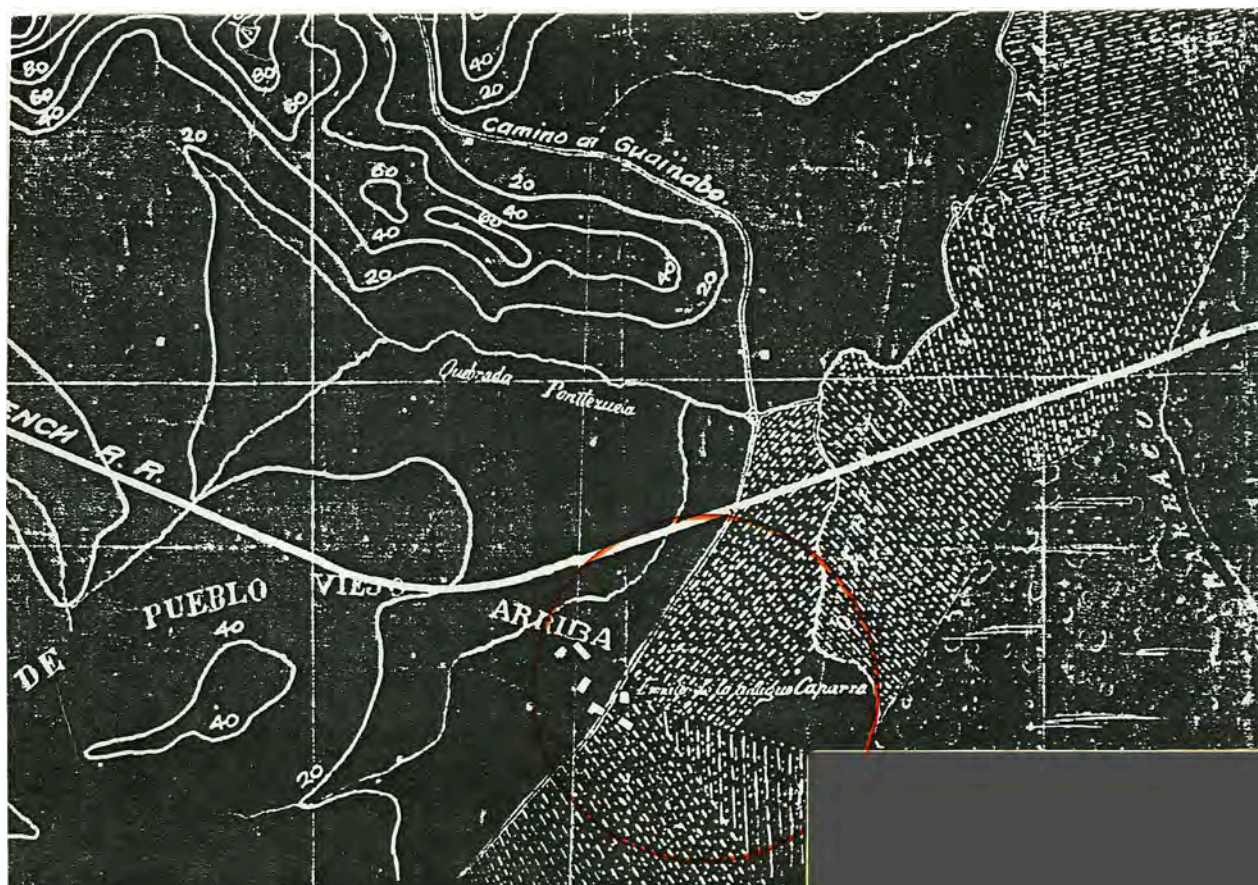


Fig. 25-E. The Map of San Juan, Puerto Rico 1884 (enlargment), San Juan, Puerto Rico, 23 January 1901, Armando Morales, Architect and Public Surveyor (draftsman who traced original 19th century plan) (de Hostos' private collection)

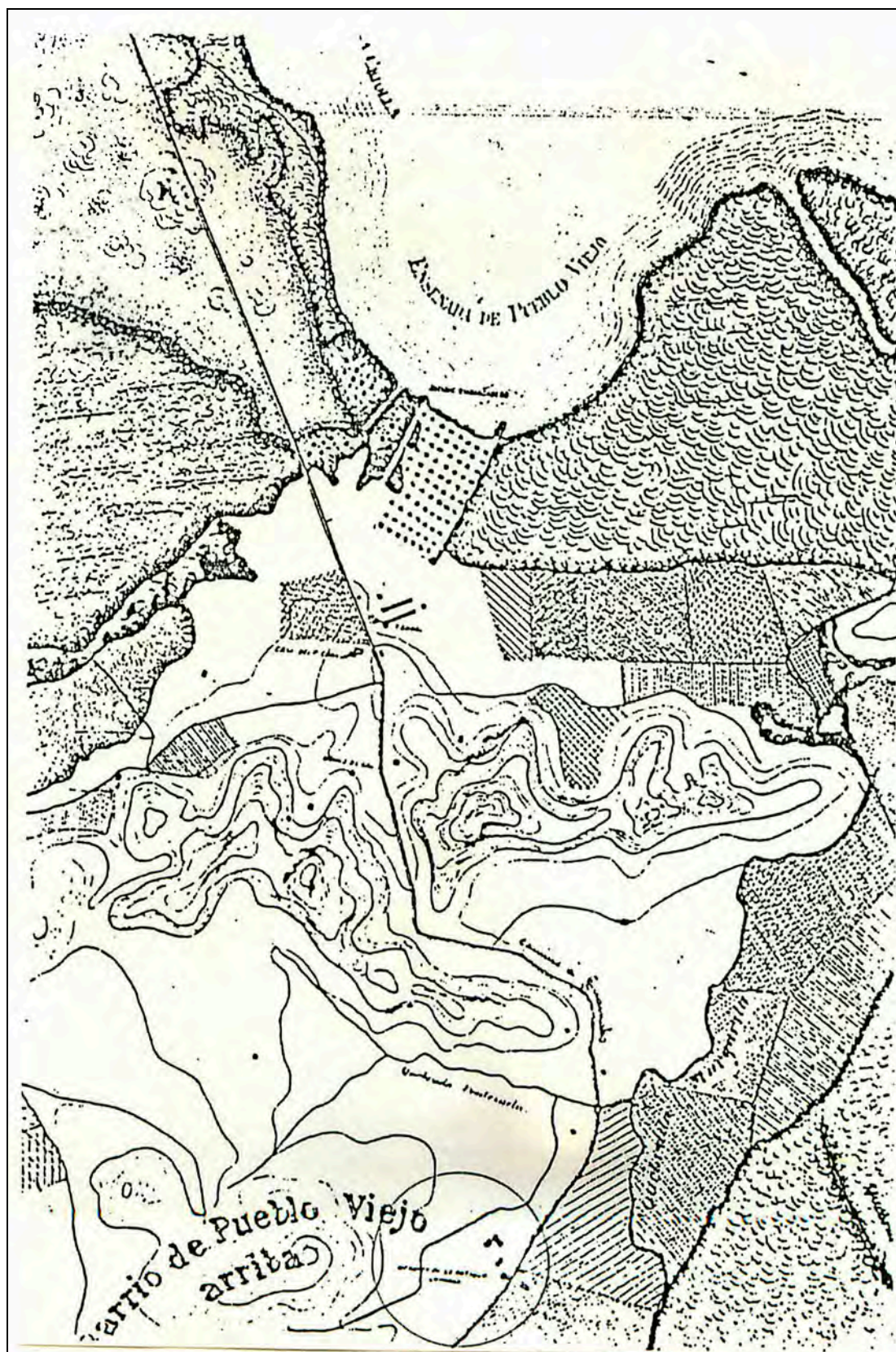


Fig. 26-E. Map of 1887. (Sepulveda 1986)



Fig. 27-E. Enlargement of 1937 aerial photograph showing different sites. (*Autoridad de Carreteras, Oficina de Fotogrametria*)

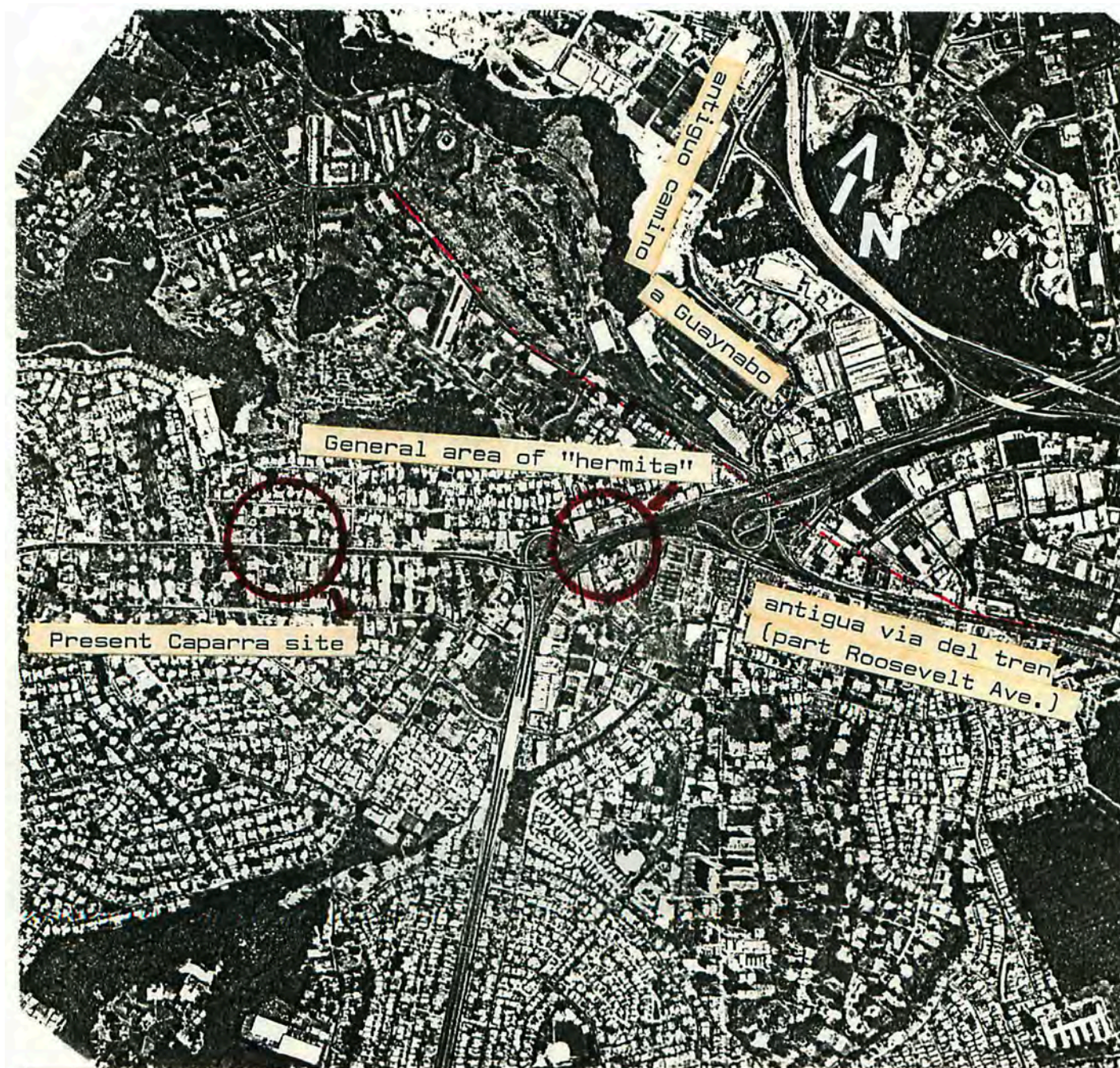


Fig. 28-E. Enlargement of aerial photograph of 1985 which shows different sites. (*Autoridad de Carreteras, Oficina de Fotogrametría*)

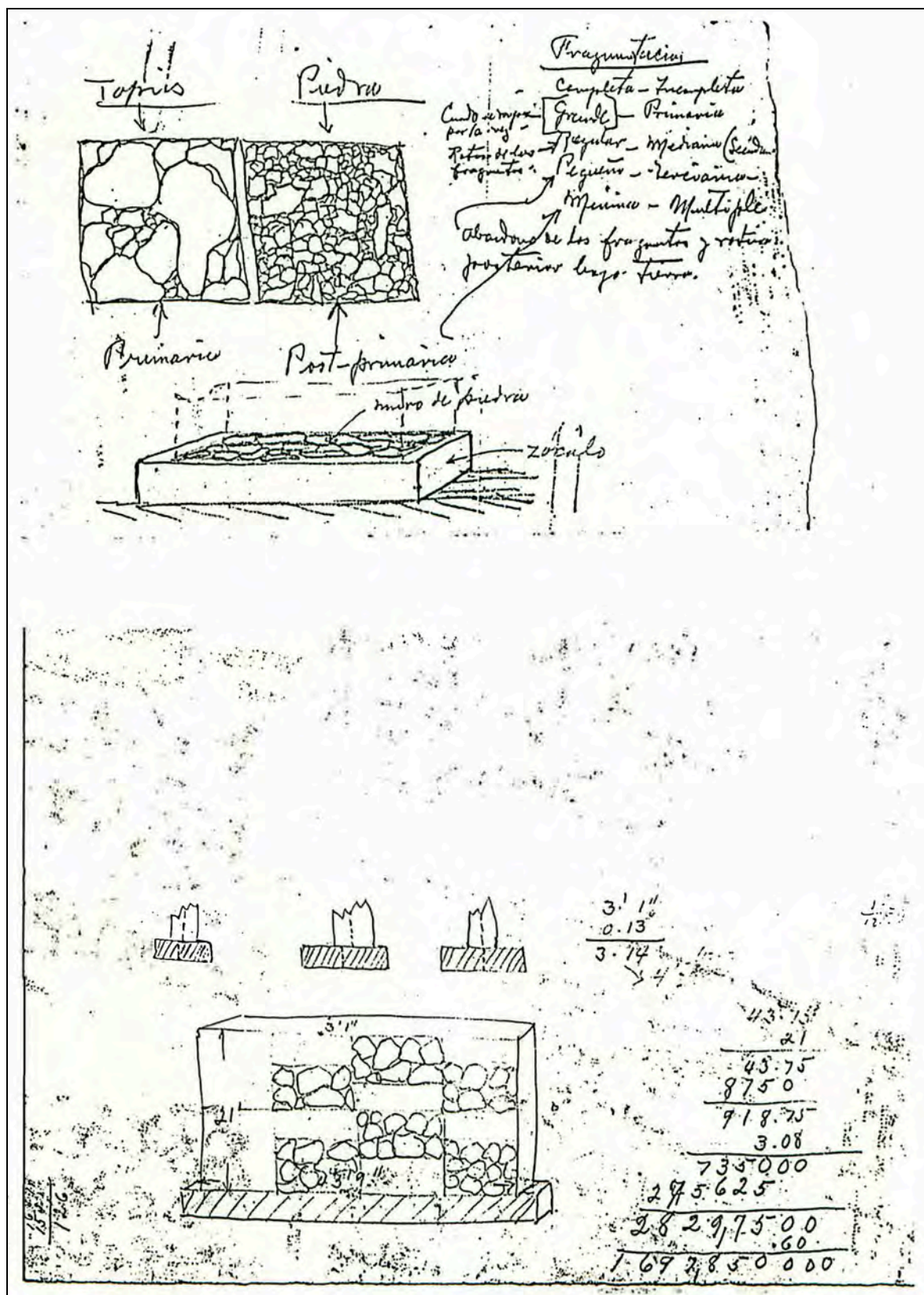


Fig. 29-E. De Hostos' sketches on the different construction systems he found at Caparra: *tapia* (mud wall) and *Piedra* (stone). (de Hostos' private collection)

Condado,
Santurce, Puerto Rico,
January 8th, 1938.

Dr. Ernest Gruening,
Chief, Division of Territories & Island Possessions,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Dr. Gruening:

In connection with the Caparra excavations which I am conducting for the Government, it has become necessary to ascertain by means of chemical analysis the origin of certain objects found there.

There are no facilities here for doing this type of work and I am taking the liberty to request your kind intervention in the matter. Would it be possible to have some one to find out if this work could be done in the laboratories of the Bureau of Soils of the Department of Agriculture, or in the Bureau of Mines?

Under separate cover I am sending to your address four specimens marked "A", "B", "C", and "D", respectively.

It seems unnecessary to say how deeply thankful to you I should feel for your kind cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

adH
Official Historian of Puerto Rico.

P. S.: The encasura gives particulars of the work required.

Rig. 30-E. Correspondence relating to chemical analysis of clays found in ruins at the Caparra site. (de Hostos' private files)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
DIVISION OF TERRITORIES AND ISLAND POSSESSIONS
WASHINGTON

January 20, 1938

Mr. Adolfo de Hostos,
Official Historian of Puerto Rico,
Santurce, Puerto Rico.

My dear Mr. de Hostos:

I have received your letter of January 8, together with samples of certain clays which you are desirous of having analyzed as to their chemical properties.

This chemical analysis will be made by the Bureau of Mines, this Department, and as soon as its report is received, I shall be glad to forward it to you.

Very sincerely yours,

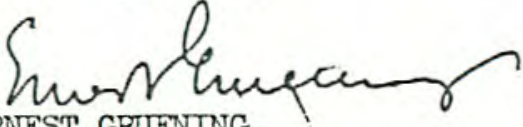

ERNEST GRUENING,
Director.

Fig. 31-E. Correspondence relating to chemical analysis of clays found in ruins at the Caparra site. (de Hostos' private files)

RCA RADIOGRAMA RCA COMMUNICATIONS, INC. UN SERVICIO DE LA RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA COMUNICACIONES INALAMBRICAS MUNDIALES		DIRECTO D. NO. \$ PALABRAS HORAS DE ENTREGA
CATEGORIA ENTERA COE DIFERIDA URGENTE COSTA RADIOGRAMA	Sirvase transmitir el siguiente radiograma de conformidad con las condiciones al dorso a las cuales consento someterme.	
SAN JUAN PR JUNE 12/38 NLT DIONISIO TRIGO ANDALUCIA PALACE SEVILLAS PAIN RUEGO PIDAME UNIVERSIDAD ESA ANALISIS QUIMICO PASTA AZULEJOS SEVILLANOS PRINCIPIOS SIGLO DIECISEIS ASUNTO OFICIAL URGE PRONTA REPUESTA HOSTOS HISTORIADOR San Juan, P.R. 1960-1962 To: Mr. Ernest Gruening, Director, U.S. Geological Survey, Washington, D.C. Tel. San Juan 1960-1962 To: Mr. Ernest Gruening, Director, U.S. Geological Survey, Washington, D.C. Nombre y dirección del remitente: N. L. Trigo, Oficial Historiador, Andalus Palace, Sevilla, España. Fecha y hora: 12 de junio de 1938.		

Fig. 31-E. Correspondence in relation to chemical analysis of clays. (de Hostos private files)

UNITED STATES
 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
 DIVISION OF TERRITORIES AND ISLAND POSSESSIONS
 WASHINGTON

April 29, 1938

Mr. Adolfo de Hostos,
 Official Historian of Puerto Rico,
 Santurce, Puerto Rico.

My dear Mr. de Hostos:

Referring to our previous correspondence closing with my letter of March 2, I transmit herewith a letter by the Director of the Geological Survey, dated April 28, giving the chemical analyses and microphotographs of various clays submitted by you.

Sincerely yours,

Ernest Gruening
 ERNEST GRUENING,
 Director.

Enclosure 1352838

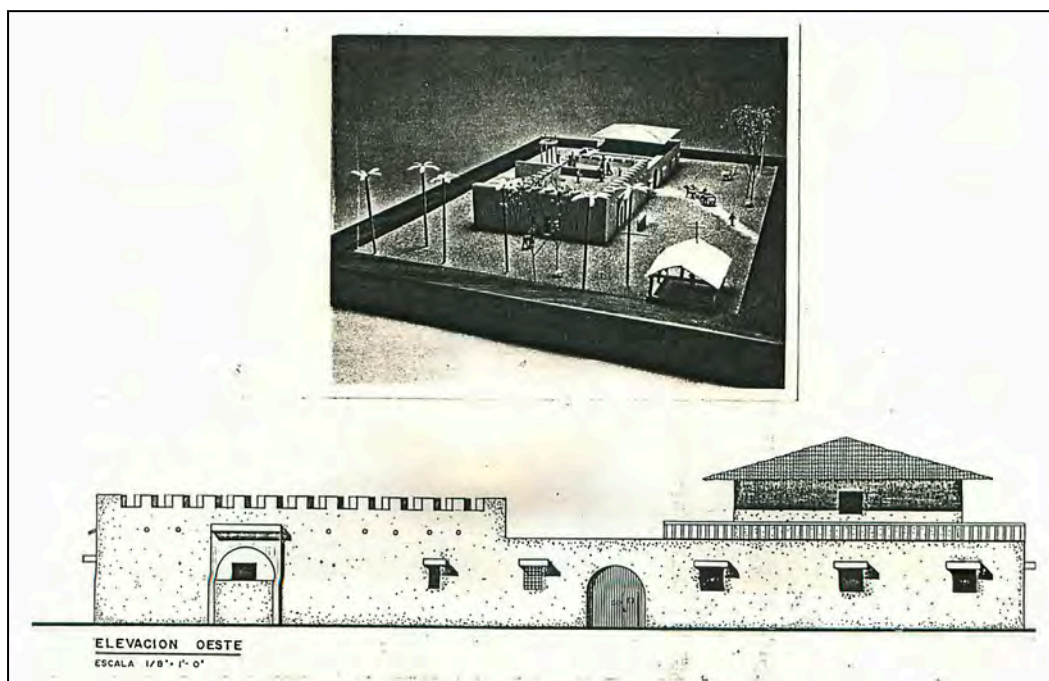


Fig. 32-E. Artistic reconstruction of Ponce de León's stronghold at Caparra by Roberto Rosario (School of Architecture, University of Puerto Rico 1984)

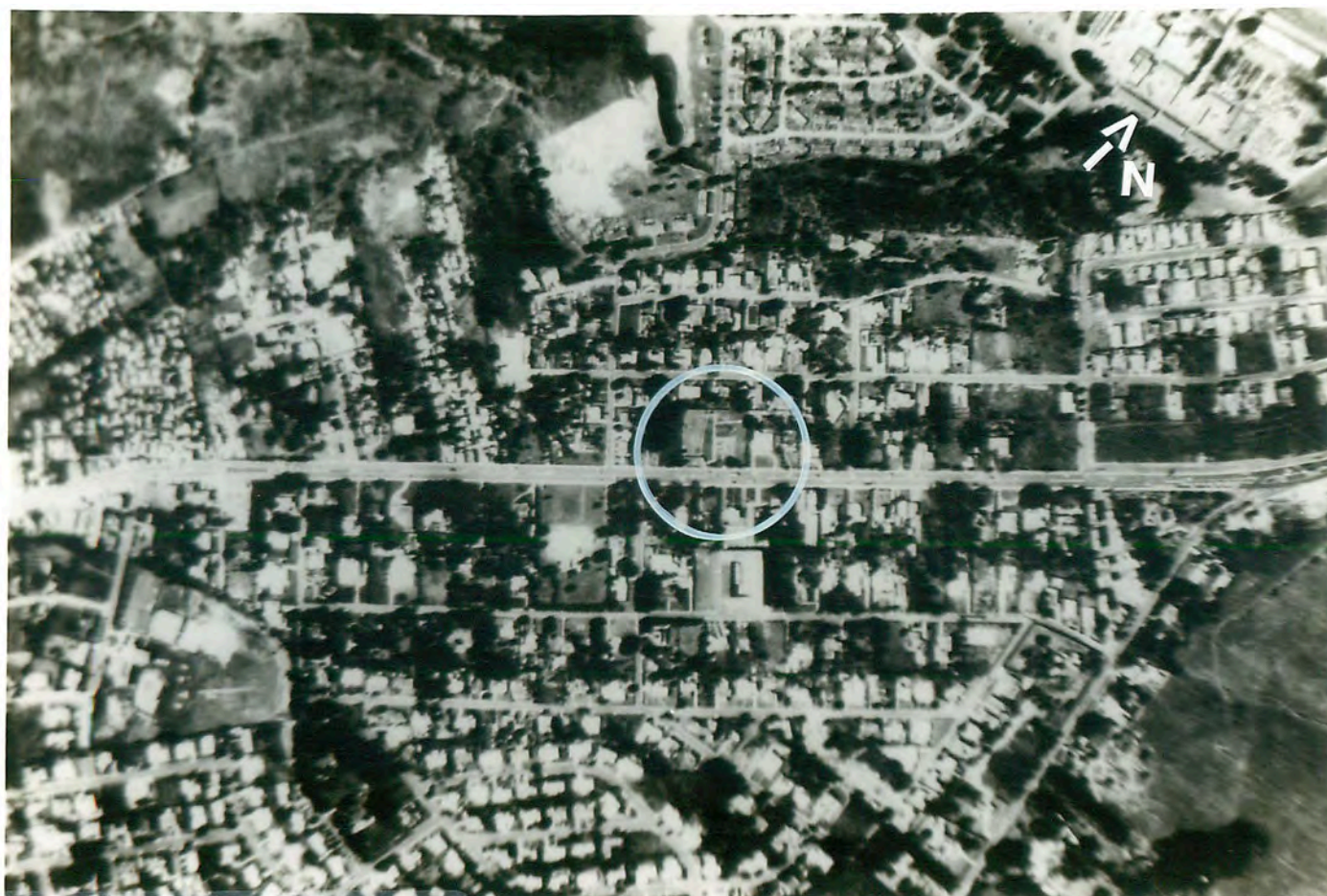


Fig. 33-E. Enlargement of 1962 aerial photograph taken on 2-16-62. (*Autoridad Carreteras, Oficina Fotogrametria*)



Fig. 34-E. Enlargement of 1973 aerial photograph taken on 4-4-73. (Autoridad Carreteras, Oficina Fotogrametia)

The Future of the Past

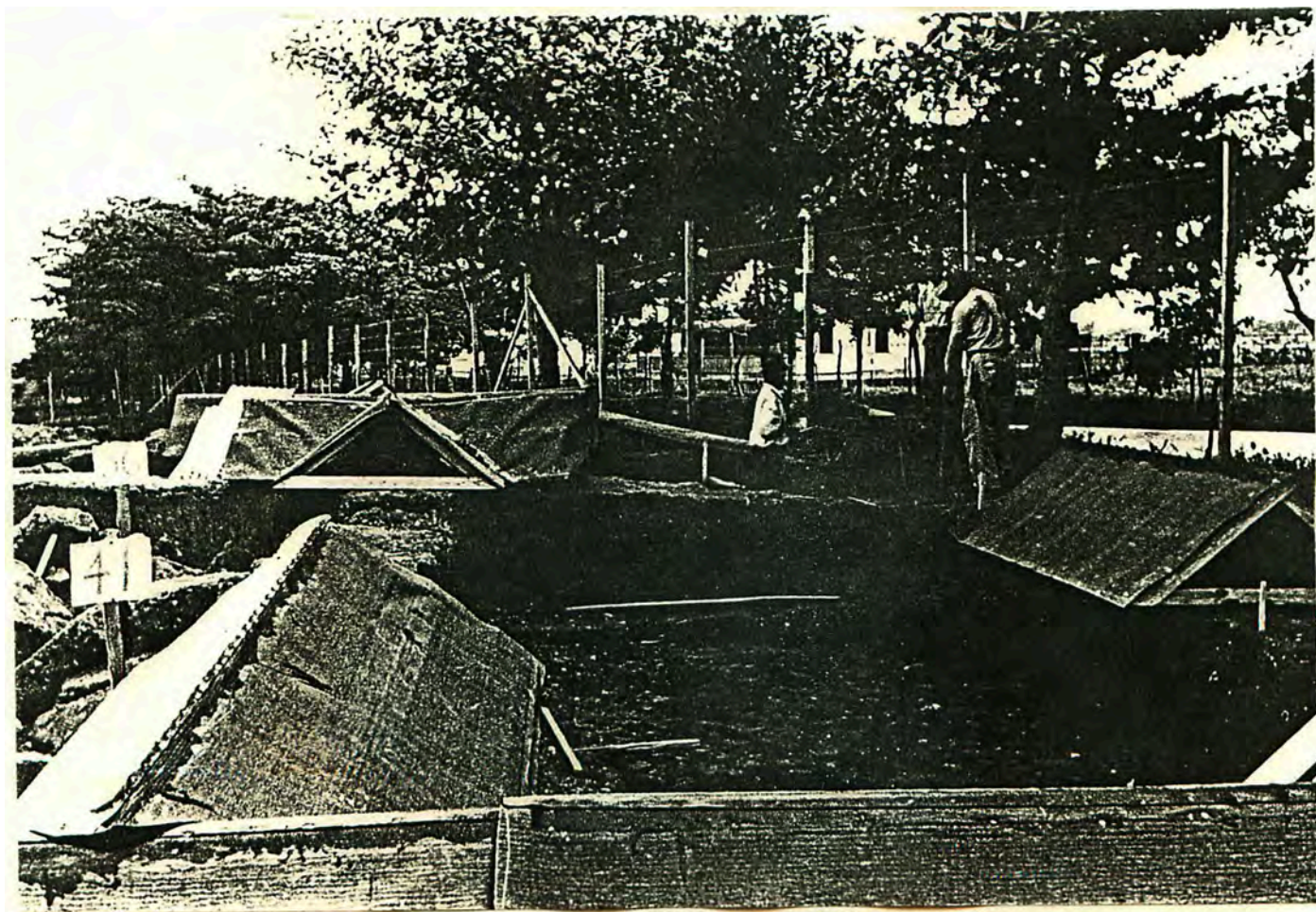
What then is the future of "La Ciudad de Puerto Rico"? The aerial photographs of 1962, 1973 and 1985 (Figs. 33-E, 34-E, and 35-E) show the outstanding growth and present density of Caparra's immediate surroundings. Even though the purported ruins of this first Spanish settlement on the island of Borinquen or San Juan Bautista have been dismantled, destroyed, moved and reinterpreted, the site is important. Many activities are being planned for the 500th year anniversary of the encounter between the Spanish and native Indian cultures of the New World (1992). More attention should definitely be paid to the "Antigua Villa de Caparra"; to knowing its boundaries; the location of other structures; what its plaza was like; to the creation of a more attractive and real commemorative park where the evidence of the city, excavated archaeologically, can be viewed by the public. The roots of that "encounter" between cultures lie beneath the surface of the Villa. If funds for these celebrations are readily available for restorations and beautification projects throughout the Island, then funds should be allocated to the site where it all started, where history still lies protected somehow, underground.

Cayetano Coll y Toste wrote an article titled: "Fundación de San Juan" which was published by Periódico El Mundo on May 24, 1919. This article eloquently summarized the importance of Villa Caparra:

Debemos marcar con una piedra blanca el lugar donde el capitan Poblador echó los cimientos del solar puertorriqueño en 'Pueblo Viejo'. Allí debemos levantar un obelisco con el marmol de nuestras canteras de Rio Piedras o Juana Diaz, y ponerle una sencilla inscripción que diga 'Aquí fue la Villa de Caparra' - 1508-1519. Los Pueblos Cultos Cultivan la Religión de los Recuerdos. Un pueblo como Puerto Rico, que tiene poetas, que tiene oradores, que tiene escritores, que tiene artistas, tiene nobles sentimientos en su corazón, y sabe rendirle homenaje a las grandes ideas (Coll y Toste 1919).

Villa Caparra, the settlement that time forgot, should be given another chance to emerge from its darkness.

SECTION F: FIELD INVESTIGATIONS AND LABORATORY RESULTS



General view of archaeological excavations of 1937 in Caparra. (de Hostos' personal files)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Methodology

Based on the archival and cartographic research done in the initial phases of the project, the field phase was designed to focus on two basic research approaches:

1. archaeological testing in the areas of the original location of the ruins as discovered in the 1937 excavations to establish the presence or absence of any corroborating artifactual evidence
2. limited archaeological testing in the two urban blocks which contained the ruins discovered in the 1937 excavations as a mechanism to further define the 16th century site parameters

Field investigations were carried out using a series of mechanical and manual testing methods. The primary fieldwork was carried out using a two-person gasoline powered eight-inch (8") soil auger in combination with shovels and double-bladed post-hole diggers (Fig. 1-F). Nearly all the testing done within the limits of the Instituto's property was done by manual excavation using shovels and post-hole diggers (Fig. 2-F). The shovel pits done using manual methods were approximately ten to fourteen inches (10"-14") in diameter. Testing in Highway PR#2, the adjacent streets, the Caparra Museum parking lot and the parking lot of the Villa Caparra Kindergarten was done with a large, truck-mounted mechanical six-inch (6") auger power-drilling rig (Fig. 3-F).

The base-map developed for the ruins was used in the field testing phase, rather than developing a uniform grid over the entire area to be tested (Fig. 4-F). Numerous other provenience systems were also considered but it was decided that these were not essential for this phase of limited testing. Since this particular phase of field testing was primarily limited to base-line determination of absence or presence of associative artifactual material, it was expedient to utilize the existing lot designations of 20th century zoning. Each lot was sequentially lettered in an west-east direction. Lots within the block containing the present ruins were assigned single letter designations, while the lots on the opposite block were assigned double letters (Fig. 4-F). Test units within each lot were numbered in sequential order. Provenience for each test unit consisted of an alpha-numeric code which identified the lot and number of the unit within each lot.

Archaeological testing was designed to be done using artificial 25 cm. levels, with excavated material being sifted through one-quarter inch wire screen mesh (Fig. 5-F). Both one-eighth and one-sixteenth inch wire mesh was also considered for use if soil conditions and data recovery potential merited their use. All artifactual material was collected and field tagged for subsequent laboratory processing and analysis.



Fig. 1-F. Basic testing equipment.



Fig. 2-F. Basic equipment for area of "ruins"



Fig. 3-F. Six-inch drilling rig used for asphalted areas. The research area was divided into five primary zones of concentration:

A series of thirteen (13) test units were located within the present property limits of the Institute's land (Fig. 6-F). These borings are identified with the letter "L" on the boring and lab sheets. The first group of these units was designed to coincide with the original locations of the ruins themselves including walls and room interiors. The rest of the units covered the purported adjoining plaza area with a single control unit in the far northern limits of the property.

A second series of nine (9) test units were carried out in the Catholic Church property located in front of Iglesia San Jose and the Parroquial House (Fig. 7-F). These units are identified by the letters "DD" on the boring and lab sheets.

A third set of four (4) primary test units were located in the parking lot of the Villa Caparra Kindergarten (Fig. 8-F). These units were located over the original positions of the walls of the ruins (Fig. 4-F). These units are identified as "CC" in the boring and laboratory sheets.

A fourth set of fifteen (15) test units were placed in selected properties within the present ruins block and those within the Iglesia San Jose block. These are identified as units beginning with "C", "D", "F", "G", "E", "I", "K", "M", "N", and "JJ" on both the boring and laboratory sheets.

The fifth and final set of six (6) test units were located in the four streets surrounding the two city blocks and a test unit directly in the center of Highway #2 in an area directly over the original location of the ruins. These are designated as "α" "δ" and "PR-2" in the boring sheets.

In total, a series of forty-seven (47) test units were done during the field phase. The locations of the units are shown on the site map (see Fig. 4-F).

Field Results

The following discussion refers to information found on the field data sheets, including Munsell readings, depths and field observations. These are presented on pages F-7 to F-53. The location of the testing units is projected on the site map developed for the project and is titled "Site Plan of Ruins of Proposed House of Juan Ponce de León: Caparra Settlement (ca. 1508)" (Fig. 4-F).

The six test units placed over the original 1936 location of the ruins (L-1 to L-6) contained cultural material with the exception of one unit (L-2) which fell within one of the original rooms. The other units which alternated between projected wall and projected room all contained cultural refuse. The units placed to the west and northwest of the 1936 ruins location also contained cultural material. In all cases the material was very fragmented and limited in quantity. Unit L-5 was interesting in that the admixture of contemporary material with the colonial material indicated a possible area of disturbance in the 1950's intervention on the ruins.

In the two lots on the south side of Highway PR-#2, four test units (CC-1 to CC-4) were placed in front of the Villa Caparra Kindergarten and correspond to the location of the southwest corner of the 1936 location of the ruins. Two of the four units tested positive yet the cultural material was mixed with twentieth century artifactual materials.

The remaining southern part of the Caparra ruins originally lay in front of the Casa Parroquial of San Jose Church. Four units (DD-1 to DD-4) corresponded to both structural and internal room locations of the 1936 location of the Caparra ruins. Cultural material was recovered from these units and the presence of fragmented brick and *argamasa* seemed consistent with the materials found in the borings to the north (i.e. L-1 to L-6) (see Fig. 9-F). The five units (DD-5 to DD-10) placed to the immediate north of the present San Jose Church contained large amounts of contemporary cultural refuse, apparently from the church construction. Nevertheless, the appearance of putative Spanish colonial ceramics may be indicative of site extension.

Of the sixteen lots on the block surrounding the Caparra ruins, eleven were tested. Cultural materials from these units contain minute fragments of colonial and contemporary materials. For the most part, the materials were small fragments of brick and *argamasa*, although the presence of colonial fragments indicates potential for site definition.

Two units on the southern side of PR-#2 (GG-1 and JJ -2) had limited artifactual material with primarily the presence of brick or *argamasa* fragments.

All test units in the surrounding roadways were found to be culturally sterile including the placement of a unit in the center of PR-#2 which would correspond to the center of the 1936 location of the ruins themselves.

The results of the field investigations proved to be much different than originally anticipated. The extremely low density of early Spanish colonial artifacts was not anticipated, as it was projected that more Spanish colonial artifactual data (although not necessarily 16th century) should have been present in the area surrounding the Caparra ruins. It was also noteworthy that the degree of contemporary refuse was higher than originally anticipated given the history of urban development in the project area.

The stratigraphy of the entire area was surprisingly shallow in soil development. The existence of a cultural strata was primarily limited to the first meter of excavation below surface. As a rule, the occurrence of a reddish and culturally sterile clay subsoil was very clear. The clayish substrata fluctuated within the 2.5YR and 5YR reds and yellowish reds of the Munsell Charts (Figs. 10-F and 11-F). In most instances the sterile clay substrata occurred between 75 cms. below surface and in few instances appeared at a depth greater than one meter below surface.

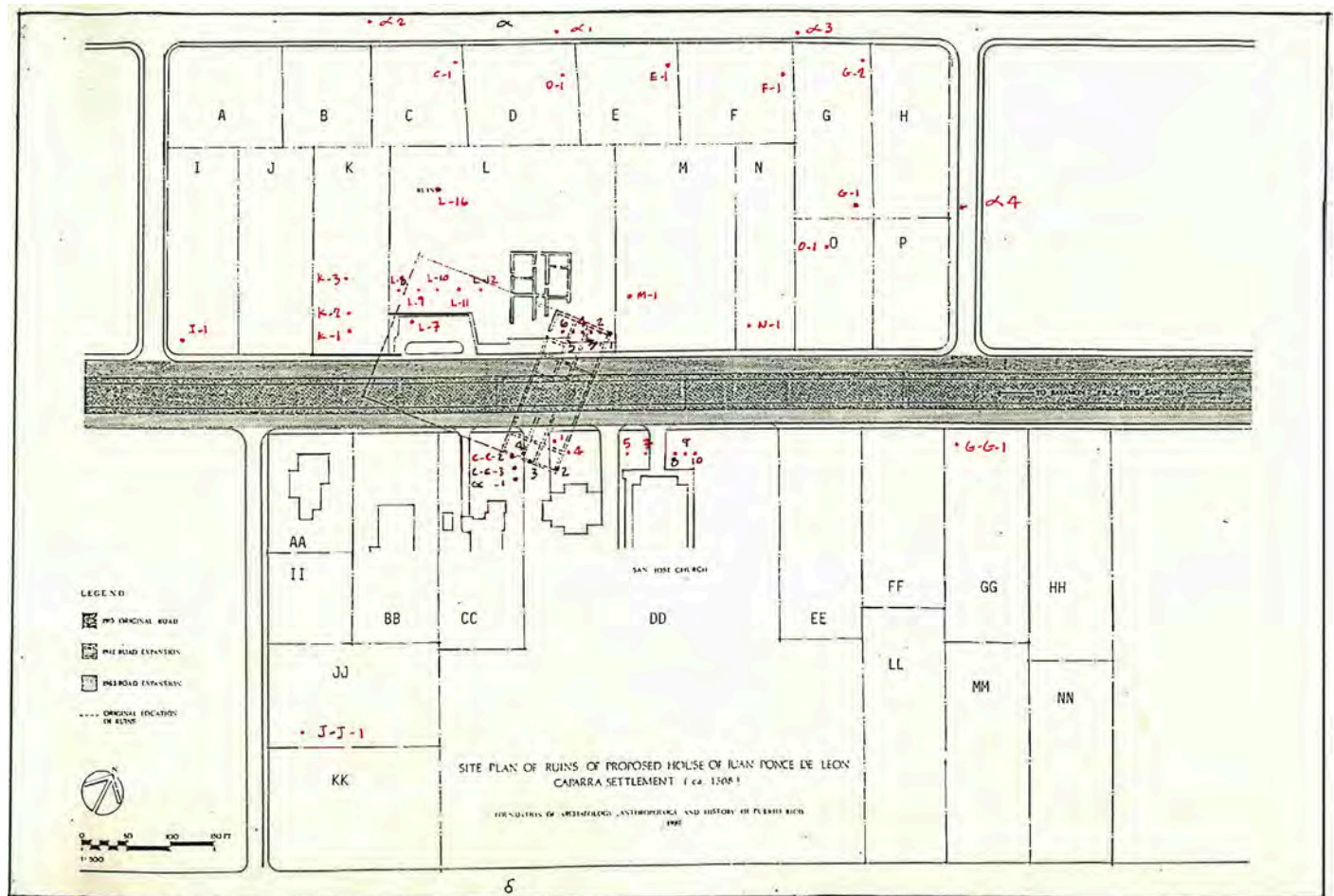


Fig. 4-F. Base-line map used for field tests at Caparra. (Foundation of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Puerto Rico, 1987)

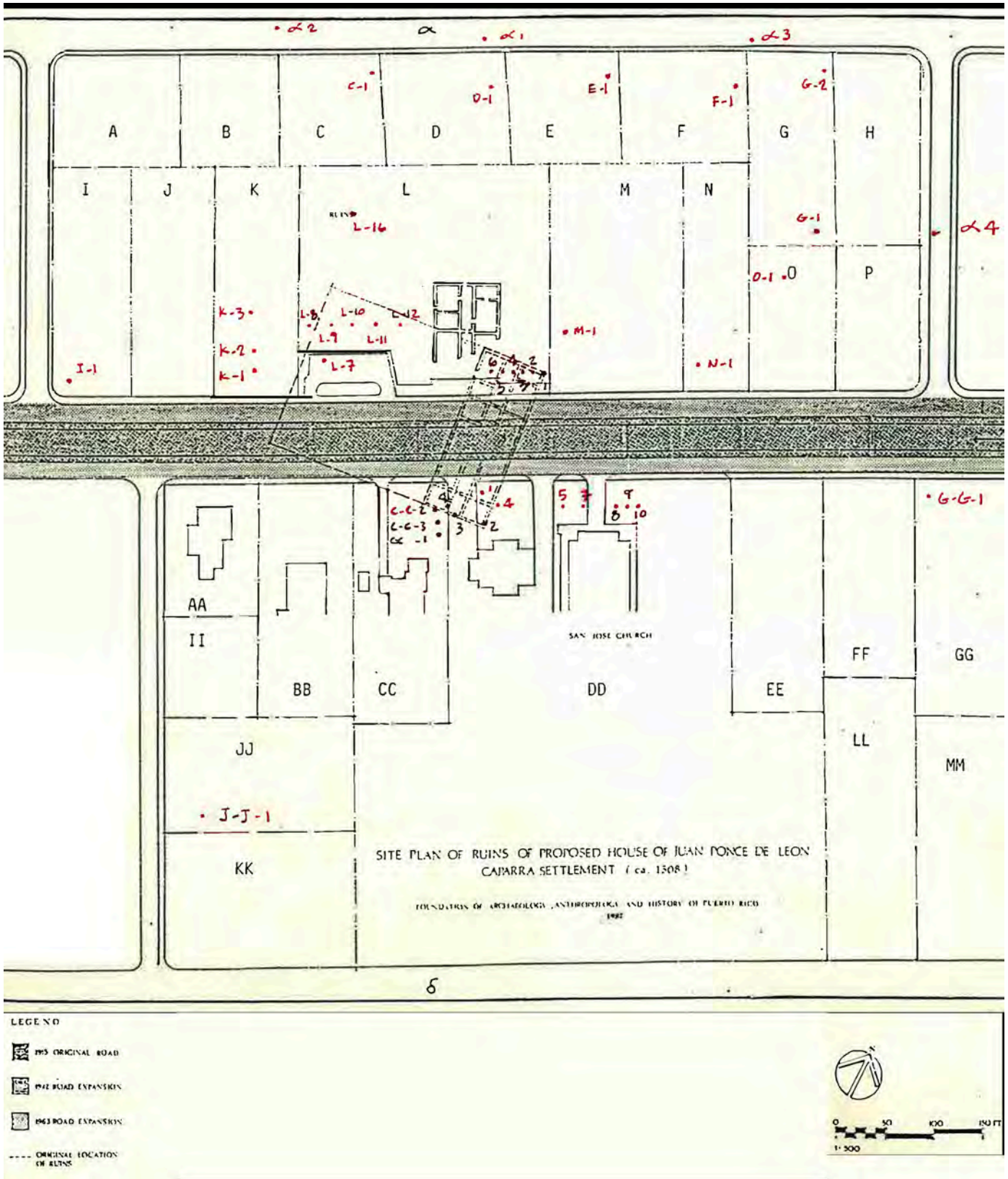


Fig. 4-F (2). Enlargement of map showing location of Field Tests at Caparra. (Foundation of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Puerto Rico 1987)



Fig. 5-F. Hand screening of tested excavation material in 1/4" screen.



Fig. 5-F. Testing zone "L", Institute's property.



Fig. 7-F. Testing zone "D-D", Iglesia San José properties.



Fig. 8-F. Testing zone "C-C", Villa Caparra Kindergarten.

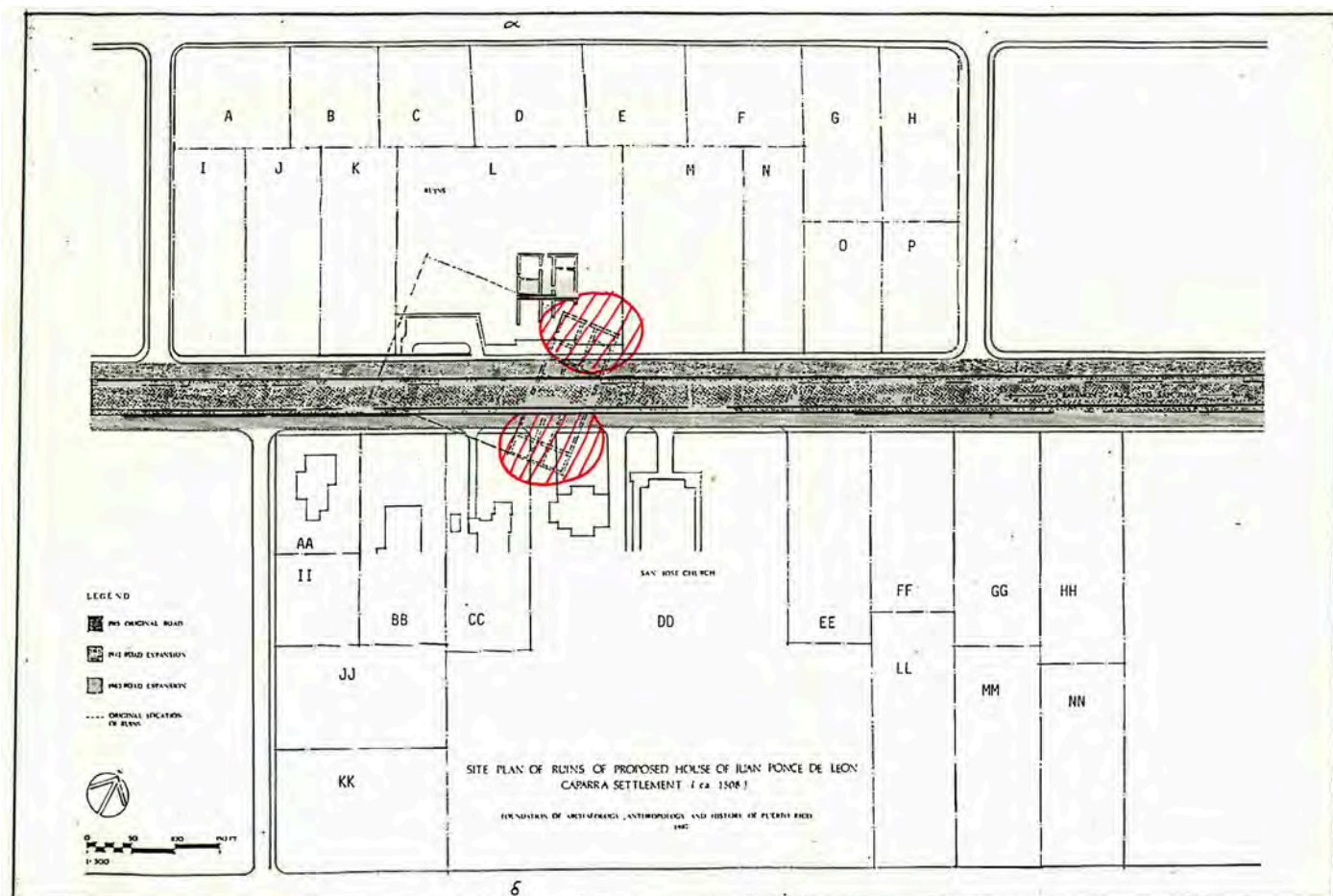


Fig. 9-F. Zone of positive testing for location of original ruins. (Foundation of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Puerto Rico 1987) (based on limited testing)



Fig. 10-F. Example of the reddish clay sterile subsoil.

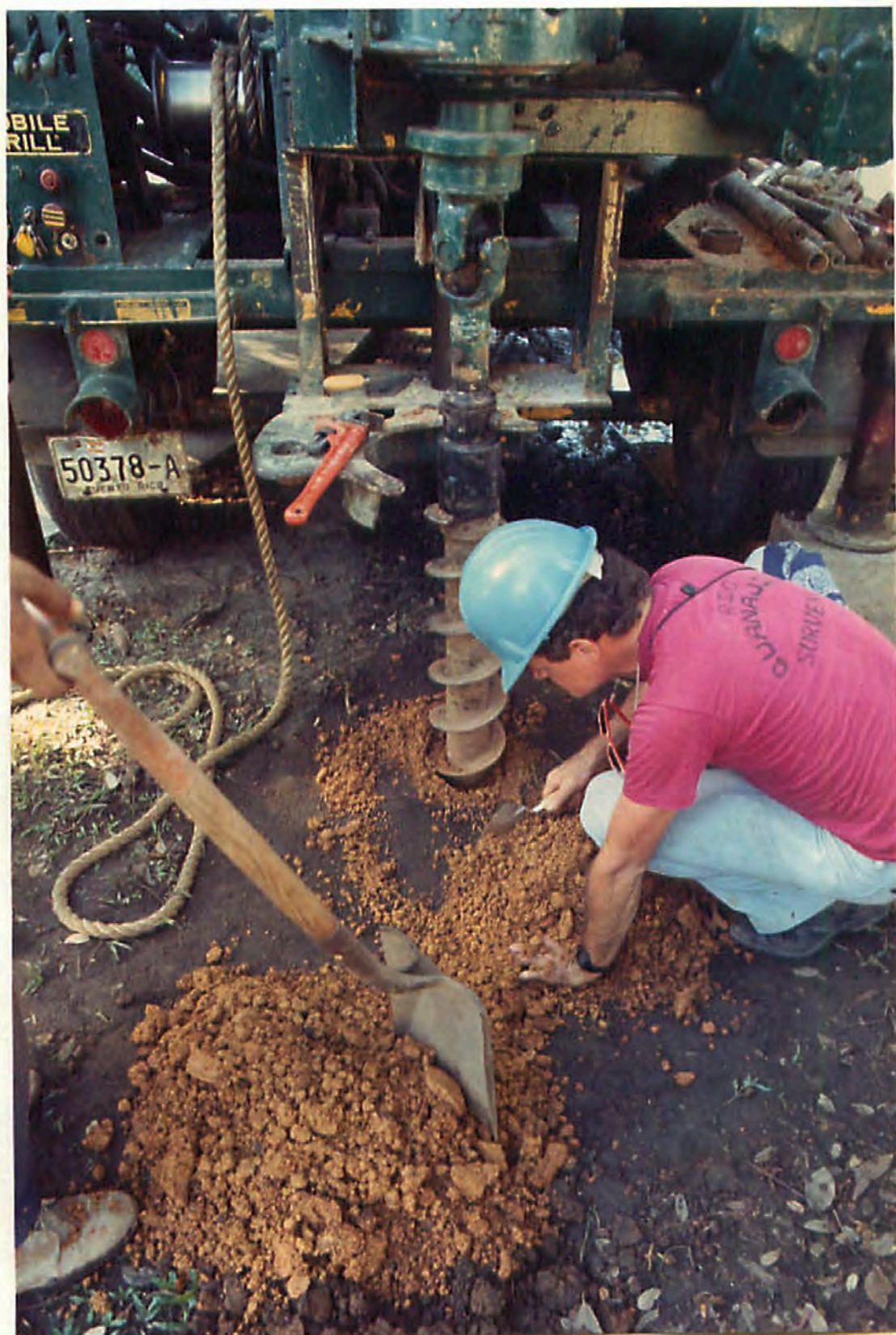


Fig. 11-F. Example of yellowish red clay sterile subsoil.

FOUNDATION OF ARCHAEOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORY OF PUERTO RICO ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TESTING LOG: CAPARRA SETTLEMENT 1508

DEPTH [CMS]	MUNSELL #	OBSERVATIONS
BORING # L-1		
0-8	10YR 2/1 black	
8-52	10YR 3/4 dark yellowish brown	[Coarse sand (0.5-1.0mm)],brick fragments, ceramic, <i>argamasa</i> , humid
45		cement with river cobbles, a tile fragment, fragments of carbon
64		fragments of tin can
65-104	2.5YR red	[compact matrix]
BORING # L-2		
0-7	10YR 2/1 black	
7-79	10YR 3/4 dark yellowish brown	[coarse sand (0.5-1.0mm), humid]
BORING # L-3		
0-20	10YR 2/1 black	modern glass, cement, plaster, <i>argamasa</i> , river cobble, brick fragment
20-40	10YR 3/4 dark yellowish brown	igneous stones, metal
45		layer of limestone
40-60		charcoal, tin can fragments, nails, brick, wire
60-80		brick, plaster, igneous stones, [matrix becomes more yellow]
80-100	2.5YR 4/8 red	brick, igneous stones, charcoal

BORING # L-4		
0-20	10YR 2/1 black	limestone, brick fragments, nails
20-40		charcoal particles, limestone fragments, plastic, brick fragment, river cobble
40-60		charcoal [increased amount], small igneous stones, [unidentified •barrier•], brick fragments, river cobbles
60-80	2.5YR 4/8 red	brick and charcoal particles, [matrix is more reddish yellow]
80-100		charcoal fragment, [level primarily sterile]
BORING # L-5		
0-20		black top-soil, high incidence of igneous stones, cement fragments, glass fragments, brick and charcoal particles
20-40		metal, brick, glass, river cobbles, nails
40-60		brick, metal bucket handle, glass, metal bottle cap, charcoal fragments
60-80		glass, modern bottles, rubber, brick, charcoal, igneous stones, nail, limestone, tile fragment
80-100		[shifts to yellowish-red strata], glass, limestone, cow bone, nail, metal fragments, charcoal, pipe fragment, tin can
100+		[strata of igneous stone impedes further excavation],[absence of yellowish-red strata]
BORING # L-6		
0-20	10YR 4/2 dark grayish brown	brick, igneous stone, limestone, [sandy matrix, coarse sand 0.5-1.0mm]
20-40		igneous stone, cement
40-60	7.5YR 4/4 dark brown	pieces of charcoal, igneous stone, <i>argamasa</i> , brick fragments, river cobbles, metal fragments, nails

60-68		small amounts of <i>argamasa</i> , brick igneous tone, glass [strata of igneous stone impedes further excavation]
BORING # L-7		
0-25		asphalt, bedding gravel
25-50	7.5YR 3/2 dark brown	charcoal flecks with some gravel [pasty clay matrix]
50-75	7.5YR 3/4 dark brown	[pasty clay mottled with 7.5YR 4/6 (Strong Brown)]
75-100	5YR 5/8 yellowish red	[clay]
100-150	2.5YR 4/8 red	[clay]
150-200	2.5YR 4/8 red	[clay]
200-300	2.5YR 4/8 red	[clay]
300-400	2.5YR 4/8 red	[clay]
400-450	2.5YR 4/8 red	[clay]



BORING # L-8		
0-20	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	brick
20-40		[sterile]
40-60		[sterile, humid, pasty matrix]
60-80	5YR 4/6 yellowish red	pieces of charcoal
80-105	5YR 5/8 yellowish red	[sterile]
BORING # L-9		
0-20	10YR 3/2 very pale dark grayish brown	particles of brick, limestone, river cobbles, and fragments of <i>argamasa</i>
20-40		fragment of a green interior-glazed container, and limestone
40-60		[sterile]
60-105	5YR 5/8 yellowish red	[sterile)
BORING # L-10		
0-20	10YR 3/3 dark brown	particles of brick, and small fragments of glass, limestone, and <i>argamasa</i>
20-40		small fragments of limestone
40-60		limestone fragments, modern white glass
60-100	2.5 YR 4/8 red	[sterile]
BORING # L-11		
0-20	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	Spanish ceramics, glass, brick fragments

20-40		brick fragments, ceramic fragments, interior glazed white ceramic fragment
40-60		igneous stone
60-100	5YR 5/8 yellowish red	[sterile]
BORING # L-12		
0-20	7.5YR 3/2 dark brown	brick fragments, glass
20-40		<i>argamasa</i> , limestone, nail, brick fragment, glass
40-108	5YR 4/6 yellowish red	[sterile]
BORING # L-16		
0-23	7.5YR 3/2 dark brown	brick, cement
23-70	5YR 4/4 reddish brown	brick [matrix compacted and humid]
70-75	5YR 5/8 yellowish red	[mottled] painted ceramic sherd
75-100		[compact clay]





FOUNDATION OF ARCHAEOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORY OF PUERTO RICO ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TESTING LOG: CAPARRA SETTLEMENT 1508

DEPTH [CMS]	MUNSELL #	OBSERVATIONS
BORING # CC-1		
0-25	7.5YR 3/2 dark brown	[humus, somewhat sandy]
25-50		concrete fragment
50-75		[clayish matrix]
75-100	7.5YR 4/6 strong brown	
100-250		[red clay substrata]
BORING # CC-2		
0-25	7.5YR 2/0 black	[muddy humus]
25-50		[clayish humus]
50-75		[brownish red strata horizon]
75-200		[red substrata]
BORING # CC-3		
0-25	7.5YR 2/0 black	beer bottle fragments, plastic [muddy humus]
25-50		[black humus mixed with clay]
50-75		[75 cms marks horizon of red substrata]
75-150		[red substrata]
BORING # CC-4		
0-25		[humus]
25-50		hard igneous rock, green bath tiles, brick fragments, concrete [or concretions]
50-100		[clayish reddish-brown strata]

DEPTH [CMS]	MUNSELL #	OBSERVATIONS
100-125		[red clay substrata]
BORING # DD-1		
0-25	7.5YR 3/4 dark brown	shell fragments, cement, glass, aluminum
25-50		pieces of charcoal, glass, igneous stone, wire [limestone bed at 46 cms. b.s.]
50-75		limestone, cement, pieces of charcoal, river cobbles
75-100	2.5YR 3/2 reddish brown	glazed tile [white interior and green exterior], limestone, glass
100-125	5YR 4/6 yellowish red	limestone
BORING # DD-2		
0-25	7.5YR 4/4 dark brown	fragments of <i>argamasa</i> , cement fragments
25-50	2.5YR 4/6 red	pieces of charcoal, cement fragments, <i>argamasa</i> , small stones [abrupt soil change within this level]
50-75		pieces of charcoal, one small igneous stone
75-100	2.5YR 4/8 red	[sterile]
BORING # DD-3		
0-25	10YR 3/2 very dark grayish brown	clay tile fragment, bottle fragment, asphalt, nails, green bath tile
25-50		bone(?), <i>argamasa</i> , brick fragments, charcoal, cement, limestone, river cobble, clay tile fragments
50-75		<i>argamasa</i> , bath tile, pieces of charcoal, cement
75-100		cement, charcoal, <i>argamasa</i> [red substrata @ 95 cms.b.s.]
BORING # DD-4		
0-25	7.5YR 4/4 dark brown	glass, metal, <i>argamasa</i> , brick fragments, cement, limestone
25-50		limestone, plastic, glass, brick fragments, pieces of charcoal, river cobbles, cement
50-75		ceramics, limestone, green glass
75-100	5YR 4/6 yellowish red	[sterile]

DEPTH [CMS]	MUNSELL #	OBSERVATIONS
BORING # DD-5		
0-25	7.5YR 3/2 dark brown	[sterile fill for lawn 0-17cms.b.s.]
	7.5YR 8/2 pinkish white	[a 3 cm. sand layer] clay tile fragments, cement, wire, limestone
25-50		clay tile, sandstone
50-75		[sterile reddish-brown matrix]
75-100		[sterile red substrata]
BORING # DD-7		
0-25	7.5YR 4/4 dark brown	[fill for lawn planting] metal, clay tile, river stone, limestone
25-50		[sand and stone fill for lawn planting] [sterile]
50-75	5YR 3/4 dark reddish brown	clay tile fragments, river cobble, brick
75-100		small stones, green exterior glazed ceramic fragment [humid reddish sand matrix]
BORING # DD-8		
0-25	10YR 3/3 dark brown	metal, glass, igneous stone [loose sandy matrix]
25-50		metal, cement [very sandy matrix]
50-75		black stone, cement, metal, brick fragments
75-100		brick fragments, charcoal, <i>argamasa</i>
BORING # DD-9		
0-25	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	ceramics, metal, glass, clay tile with cement
25-50		[sand layer underlain with construction debris], high content of clay tile fragments [Note: It was noted in the field that the church was constructed with a red-clay tile roof in 1948 and that there was a chapel on the site before.]
50-75		cement, red clay tiles, wire, shell fragments, bone fragments
75-100	5YR 3/4 dark reddish brown	metal, reinforcing rod, glazed ceramic

DEPTH [CMS]	MUNSELL #	OBSERVATIONS
BORING # DD-10		
0-25	5Y 8/3 pale yellow	[0-12 cms.b.s.]
	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	[12+ cms.b.s.]
		glass, charcoal, ceramics, cement
25-50		glass, river stone, cement
50-75	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	
75-100		metal, glass, painted ceramics
100-125	5YR 3/4 dark reddish brown	[mottled and compacted] pieces of charcoal
BORING # C-1		Note: Sr. Deya (owner of the property) informed us of filtration problems with septic tank in the area due to the dense clay substrata. He also commented that during excavations for a septic tank in his property he did not observe any archaeological material.
0-25	7.5YR 4/6 strong brown	bone, igneous stone, cement [sandy fill for lawn planting]
25-50		igneous stone, limestone, rubber
50-75		[mottled matrix] [sterile]
75-100		[sterile] [@ 85cms. b.s. large stone impeded further excavation]
BORING # D-1		Note: Sr. Mudafort (owner of the property) informed us that his property had been filled for lawn preparation. He had no recollection of having had seen archaeological material on his property at any time in the past.
0-25	5YR 4/4 reddish brown	[modern fill of igneous stone, soil and limestone] cement with river stone, particles of brick
25-50		fragments of cement
50-75		[sterile]
75-100	2.5YR red	[sterile][substrata]
BORING # E-1		
0-25	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	ceramic fragments [humid matrix]

DEPTH [CMS]	MUNSELL #	OBSERVATIONS
25-50	5YR 4/6 yellowish red	[25-34 cms. b.s.]
	2.5YR 4/6 dark red	[34+ cms.] [humid and compacted matrix]
50-75	2.5YR 3/6 dark red	[humid and more compacted matrix]
75-100		traces of charcoal [humid and compacted matrix]
		[@ 80cms. b.s. strata of 2.5YR 4/8 begins]
BORING # F-1		
0-25	10YR 3/2 very dark grayish brown	[0-13 cms. b.s.]
	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	[13-25 cms. b.s.] ceramic fragment [compacted and humid matrix]
25-50		metal [compacted and humid matrix]
50-75	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	[down to 66 cms.b.s.]
	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown	[horizon@ 66 cms.b.s.] high amount of charcoal
75-100	10YR 5/6 yellowish brown	[mottled]
BORING # G-1		
0-25	5YR 3/4 dark reddish brown	[humid matrix]
25-50		[humid and compacted matrix] [mottled with 5YR 3/4 predominant]
50-75	5YR 3/4 dark reddish brown	[humid and compacted matrix] [gradually shifts mottling to predominantly 5YR 6/8]
75-100	5YR 6/8 reddish yellow	[mottled matrix to 89 cms.b.s. where shifts to predominantly 10YR 7/8 (yellow)]
BORING # G-2		
0-25	5YR 3/1 very dark gray	[0-17 cms.b.s.] [sandy matrix]
	5YR 4/4 reddish brown	[17+ cms.b.s.] [compacted and humid matrix]
25-50		ceramic fragments [compacted and humid clay matrix]
75-100		[compact and humid matrix]

DEPTH [CMS]	MUNSELL #	OBSERVATIONS
BORING # I-1		
0-25	7.5YR 3/2 dark brown	[contemporary fill for lawn preparation] igneous stone, glass, charcoal traces, metal
25-50		bone, bath tile, metal, piece of charcoal, modern glass, brick fragment, limestone
50-75	5YR 4/6 yellowish red	glass, limestone, bone fragments, charcoal
75-100		glass, limestone
BORING # K-1		
0-20		glass, electric cable, automobile part, cement fragment [contemporary trash]
20-40		[contemporary trash continues]
40-92		[contemporary trash] [unit abandoned]
BORING # K-2		
0-20	5YR 3/4 dark reddish brown	[sterile]
20-40		[sterile]
40-60		[sterile]
60-80	2.5YR 4/8 red	[sterile]
80-100		[sterile]
BORING # K-3		
0-20	10YR 3/2	[sterile]
20-40		[sterile]
BORING # M-1		
0-25	7.5YR 2/0 black	[contemporary fill for lawn preparation] small fragments of river cobble, argamasa, glass
25-50		glass fragment [contemporary fill down to = 46 cms.b.s.]

DEPTH [CMS]	MUNSELL #	OBSERVATIONS
50-75	5Y 4/2 olive gray	limestone, river stone, <i>argamasa</i> , pieces of charcoal [river bed?]
75-100		<i>argamasa</i> , igneous stone
100-125		<i>argamasa</i> , metal, glazed ceramics (reddish yellow soil horizon begins)
BORING # N-1		
0-25	5YR 3/1 very dark gray	fragments of bone, metal and charcoal [sandy soil matrix]
25-50	5YR 4/4 reddish brown	[@ 37 cms. b.s.] [humid sandy soil matrix]
50-75	5YR 4/4 reddish brown	[mottled with 5YR 3/1 and 5YR 2.5/1] [very sandy soil]
75-100		[mottled 5YR 4/4] glass fragment, charcoal traces
BORING # O-1		
0-25	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	igneous stone
25-50	2.5YR 4/8 red	[sterile substrata]
BORING # GG-1		
0-25	5YR 3/2 dark reddish brown	[sandy soil]
25-50	5YR 3/4 dark reddish brown	[humid and compacted matrix]
50-75	10YR 5/8 yellowish brown	[humid and compacted matrix]
75-100		(@ 86 cms.b.s.) [compacted and humid clay]
BORING # JJ-1		
0-25	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	fragments of <i>argamasa</i> and bone [humid matrix]
25-50	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	[@ 25-45 cms. b.s.]
50-75		[@ 45c ms. b.s.] traces of charcoal [compacted and humid matrix]
75-100		traces of charcoal

DEPTH [CMS]	MUNSELL #	OBSERVATIONS
BORING # α-1		
0-25		asphalt and bedding gravel
25-50	7.5YR 3/2 dark brown	[gravel with pasty soil matrix]
50-75		[sandy clay] gravel with some asphalt
75-100	5YR 3/3 dark reddish brown	[clayish soil]
100-150	5YR 5/8 yellowish red	[soil horizon in lower part of level]
150-200		[reddish clay substrata]
200-250		[red with yellow mottled matrix]
250-275		[yellowish-red strata]
BORING # α-2		
0-25		gravel with asphalt
25-50		gravel with whitish-brown powdery matrix [pulverized stone?]
50-75	10YR 3/3 dark brown	[sandy clay]
75-100	5YR 4/4 reddish brown	[sandy clay - more pasty]
100-150		[brown pasty clay]
150-200		[red clay strata begins - yellow/green/black mottling]
BORING # α-3		
0-25		asphalt with bedding gravel
25-50		[brown dry soil]
50-75		[dark brown top-soil with limestone]
75-100		[dark brown to black top- soil]
100-150		[yellowish clay]
150-200		[yellowish clay substrata continues]

BORING # α-4		asphalt, bedding gravel [whitish powdery matrix]
0-25		[whitish-yellow powdery matrix]
25-50		[reddish soil]
50-75		[reddish humid soil]
75-100		[uniform reddish soil]
100-150		[continues reddish and sterile]
BORING # PR2 - I		
0-25		asphalt with bedding gravel
25-50		gravel [light brown powdery matrix]
50-75		gravel [light brown matrix]
75-100		gravel [light brown matrix]
100-150		gravel [brown clayish matrix]
150-200		[brown clay with reddish brown soil horizon at base of level]
200-250		[reddish clay]
250-300		reddish clay [sterile]
300-350		[slightly humid reddish clay]
350-400		[dense red clay]
BORING # δ-1		
0-25		cement
25-50		cement [@ 50 cms.b.s. brown clay horizon]
50-75		[brown sandy clay]
75-100		[@ 100 cms.b.s. red clay substrata horizon]





Laboratory Analysis

The artifactual material collected during archaeological field testing was washed, sorted and identified subsequent to the field phase.

The majority of the artifactual material recuperated during field testing was highly fragmented material. Most of the brick, ceramics, glass and *argamasa* recovered was composed of one to two centimeter fragments often lacking clear diagnostic traits. Although mechanical augering may have contributed to some fragmentation, by and large, most of the fragmentation was prior to any testing action.

Very few ceramic artifacts which possessed an identifiable paste, glazing or other diagnostic trait were found in the entire area tested. The only potential 16th century diagnostic materials found in the testing occurred on the north side of Highway PR-#2 in units L-11 and M-1 (Colombia Plain 1490-1650). Unit L-11 possessed a single sherd and unit M-1 only four sherds of the Colombia Plain ware. The only other datable material was the occurrence of 2 fragments of El Morro ware (1600- 1770) in unit G-1 (see Fig. 12-F).

A few Spanish colonial majolica fragments, not clearly identifiable to a time frame any more specific than "colonial", were found to the immediate north and south of the present location of the ruins (see lab sheets for lots L [pp.F-7 to F-19], G [pp. F-37 to F-38) and DD [pp. F-24 to F-32]). A general area for colonial material related to the 1936 ruins can be extrapolated on this initial evidence (Fig. 13-F).

Diagnostic glass, metal or recovered materials of composition other than clay were also extremely sparse. Most identifiable non-ceramic artifacts were assignable to contemporary human activity. Much of the metal fragments found were not usable for analysis due to their badly eroded state of conservation or lack of any recognizable form.

In addition to clear diagnostic materials, the occurrence of brick fragments, *argamasa*, ceramics and other putative diagnostic colonial materials are highlighted in the laboratory identifications and counts on the following pages.



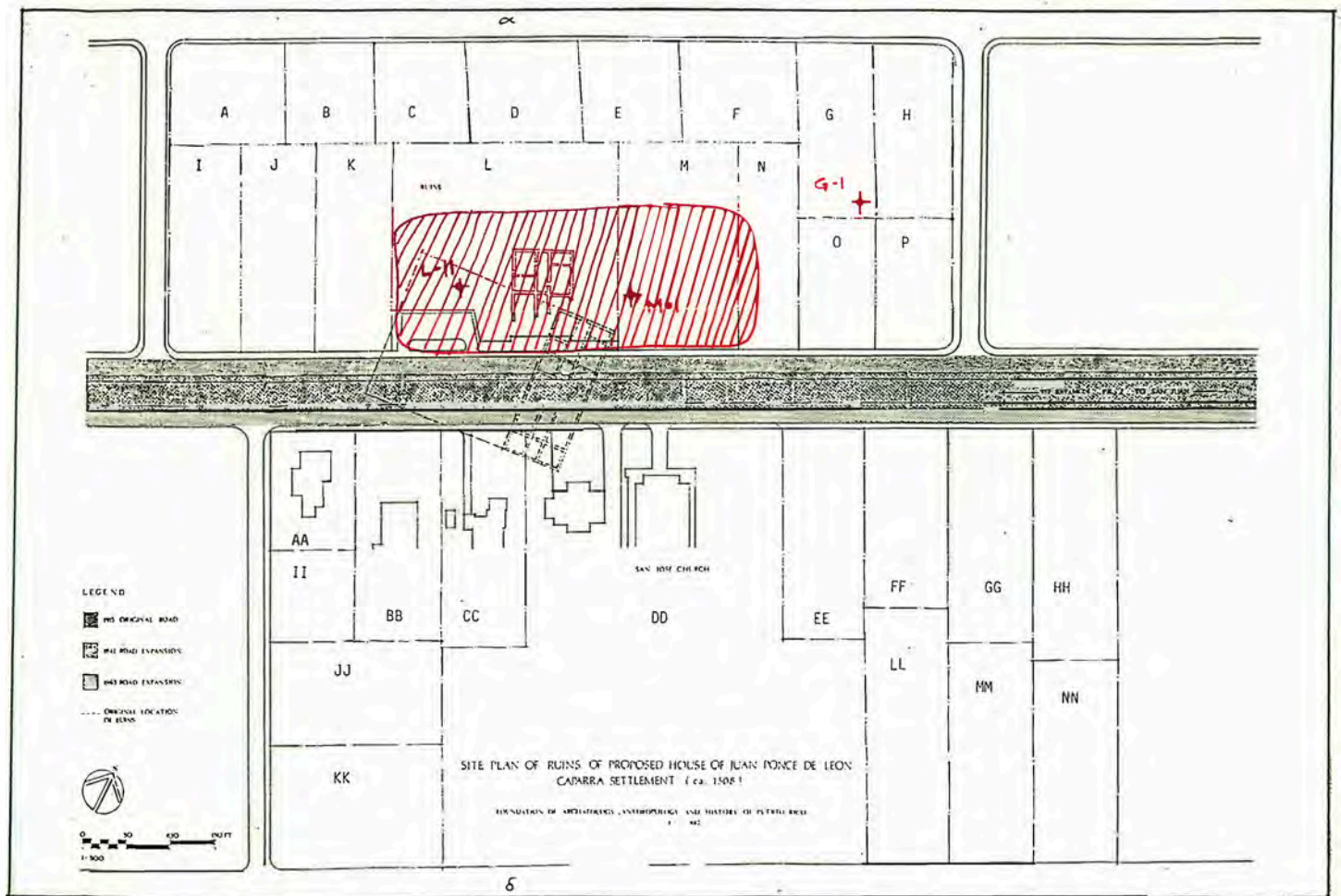


Fig. 12-F. Location of possible 16th century artifactual deposits. (Foundation of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Puerto Rico 1987) (based on limited testing)

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
L - 1	0-25	1 brick fragment 1 uid. stone
	25-50	1 brick half 1 bath tile 1 brick fragment
L - 2		[sterile]
L - 3	0-20	6 small uid. stones 15 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 1 fragment of clear glass
	20-40	2 small uid. metal fragments 9 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 3 small uid. stones
	40-60	5 clear green glass fragments 1 clear glass fragment 4 metal fragments 1 modern nail 16 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 10 uid. stones 1 brick fragment
	60-80	1 uid. stone 8 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 1 brick fragment
	80-100	2 uid. stones 6 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
L - 4	0-20	1 fragment of clay roof tile 2 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 1 igneous stone
	20-40	1 fragment clear glass 1 igneous stone 3 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	40-60	1 igneous stone

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
L - 5	0-20	1 piece of <i>argamasa</i> 1 uid. stone
	20-40	1 clear blue glass fragment 1 uid. nail 7 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 1 uid. stone
	40-60	1 metal hasp 3 fragments of uid. metal 1 clear glass fragment 1 brown glass fragment 4 brick fragments 1 small uid. stone 3 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	60-80	1 fragment of modern porcelain 4 fragments of clear glass 3 clear green glass fragments 4 brown glass fragments 4 fragments of uid. metal 7 uid. stones
	80-100	3 bone fragments 1 clear green glass fragments 5 clear glass fragments 6 brown glass fragments 1 metal cylinder 8 uid. metal fragments 1 nail 2 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
L - 6	0-29	2 pieces of mortar 3 uid. stones 11 brick fragments
	20-40	2 uid. stones 1 clear green glass fragment
	40-60	1 nail 1 fragment of clear glass 5 pieces of mortar 3 brick fragments

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
	60-80	2 pieces of mortar 3 brick fragments 1 piece of gravel 1 piece of porcelain 1 uid. stone
L - 7		[sterile - asphalted]
L - 8	0-20	2 brick fragments
L - 9	0-20	2 fragments of clear glass 1 fragment of clear green glass 5 pieces of mortar 2 igneous stones 1 uid. fragment of metal
	20-40	1 brick fragment 1 piece of mortar
L - 10	0-20	1 fragment of clear glass 9 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	20-40	1 piece of <i>argamasa</i> 1 small stone
	40-60	1 piece of <i>argamasa</i> 1 glass fragment
L - 11	0-20	1 brown glass fragment 12 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 1 fragment of uid. coarse earthenware
	20-40	1 fragment of uid. coarse earthenware 1 brick fragment 1 fragment majolica Columbia Plain [1490-1650]
	40-60	1 small stone
L - 12	0-20	2 brown glass fragments 1 clear green glass fragment 8 pieces of mortar

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
	20-40	1 modern nail 1 brown glass fragment 1 clear green glass fragment 8 pieces of mortar 1 uid. refined coarse earthenware fragment 1 uid. stone 2 small brick fragments
	40-60	1 piece of mortar
L - 16	0-25	1 brick fragment 1 piece of mortar
	25-50	1 brick fragment
	50-75	1 fragment of green majolica [n.d.]
CC - 1		[sterile]
CC - 2		[sterile]
CC - 3		[sterile]
CC - 4	0-25	
	25-50	8 green bath tile fragments 2 fragments of uid. stone 1 brick fragment
	50-75	5 green bath tile fragments
DD - 1	0-25	1 marble tile fragment 3 fragments of igneous rock 1 piece of <i>argamasa</i>
	25-50	1 small uid. fragment of metal 3 igneous stones 1 piece of plastic

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
	50-75	3 igneous stones 1 fragment of clear green glass
	75-100	1 fragment of uid. green majolica
DD - 2	0-25	3 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	25-50	1 piece of <i>argamasa</i>
	50-75	1 small uid. stone
DD - 3	0-25	6 nails 4 brick fragments 2 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 4 uid. stone fragments
	25-50	5 uid. stones 3 bone fragments 3 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	50-75	3 uid. stones 1 uid. ceramic fragment [apparently burnt]
	75-100	2 uid. stones
DD - 4	0-25	1 fragment of clear green glass 1 piece of metal [file?] 5 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	25-50	1 fragment of clear glass 3 uid. stones 4 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 1 piece of cement with gravel
	50-75	1 fragment of clear green glass 5 fragments of uid. stone 4 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	75-100	5 fragments of uid. stone
DD - 5	0-25	10 fragments of clay roof tiles 2 fragments of wire 4 pieces of mortar 1 igneous stone

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
	25-50	5 pieces of mortar 1 fragment of limestone 2 pieces of fired clay
DD - 7	0-25	1 piece of mortar 3 fragments of metal 4 uid, stones 1 piece of gravel
	25-50	1 igneous stone 1 limestone fragment
	50-75	1 igneous stone 4 pieces of fired clay
	75-100	1 piece of gravel 1 fragment of uid. green majolica
DD - 8	0-25	1 nail 1 fragment of clear glass 1 glass marble 1 piece of white mortar
	25-50	7 nails 1 piece of mortar 1 fragment of tubular metal 4 fragments of brick
	50-75	1 nail 1 piece of mortar 2 fragments of brick 1 piece of fired clay 1 piece of gravel
	75-100	1 fragment of limestone 1 piece of mortar 4 pieces of fired clay
DD - 9	0-25	11 fragments of clay roof tiles 2 pieces of mortar 1 fragment of uid. blue majolica 1 fragment of uid. burned majolica 1 fragment of clear glass 1 metal ring 1 plastic doll arm

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
	25-50	2 nail fragments 1 piece of wire 3 fragments of clay roof tiles 1 piece of mortar 1 piece of cement 3 uid. shell fragments 1 uid. shell
	50-75	19 fragments of clay roof tiles 2 fragments of uid. bone 15 nails 1 cement nail 1 piece of limestone 5 pieces of rusted wire 3 pieces of uid. rusted metal pieces of asphalt 5 fragments of uid. shell
	75-100	2 fragments of uid. green majolica 2 nails 4 pieces of asphalt 4 fragments of gray majolica [burnt?] 4 fragments of coarse earthenware 1 fragment of clay roof tile 2 fragments of El Morro ware 1 fragment of uid. metal 5 pieces of mortar 1 fragment of uid. shell
DD - 10	0-25	2 fragments of clear glass 3 fragments of dark green glass 1 piece of gravel 1 rusty modern nail 1 piece of limestone 2 fragments of cement 3 uid. mineral fragments 2 pieces of mortar
	25-50	3 nails 1 light bulb base 2 fragments of clear glass 1 fragment of green glass 2 pieces of limestone 2 pieces of mortar 3 fragments of brick
	50-75	[sterile]

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
	75-100	4 rusty nail fragments 1 piece of metal wire (?) 1 metal tack or nail head 1 piece of clear glass 1 fragment of uid. majolica 2 pieces of gravel 1 piece of white mortar 1 piece of grey mortar 1 fragment of uid. ceramic
	100-125	2 pieces of white mortar 3 uid. mineral fragments 1 fragment of uid. green majolica
C - 1	0-25	3 bone fragments 5 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 30 small stones 1 fragment of clear glass 2 metal fragmennts
	25-50	1 fragment UID coarse earthenware 1 fragment of clear green glass 2 pieces of plastic 1 piece of mortar 11 small stones
	50-75	5 pieces of mortar 15 small stones 1 piece of cement
D - 1	0-25	7 uid. stones 9 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	25-50	5 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
E - 1	0-25	2 fragments of rusted metal 3 fragments of clear glass 1 fragment of creamware 1 piece of blue plastic 7 pieces of mortar 3 fragments of brick
F - 1	0-25	4 uid. metal fragments 1 brick fragment

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
	25-50	1 uid. metal fragment 1 brick fragment
G - 1	0-25	1 piece of charcoal 1 piece of cement 1 piece of mortar 2 fragments of El Morro ware [1600-1770]
	25-50	[sterile]
	50-75	[sterile]
	75-100	1 piece of clear glass
G - 2	0-25	[sterile]
	25-50	1 fragment uid. green majolica
I - 1	0-25	mouth of a glass bottle (2) 4 clear glass fragments 2 uid. stones
	25-50	14 uid. metal fragments 4 pieces of clear glass 5 pieces of clear green glass 1 fragment of whiteware 1 white bathroom tile fragment
	50-75	2 fragments of clear glass 1 fragment of clear green glass 1 uid. stone
	75-100	1 fragment of clear glass 1 fragment of brown glass 2 pieces of argamasa
K - 1		[contemporary trash - dumping ground]
K - 2		[sterile]

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
K - 3	0-20	2 uid. fragments of metal
M - 1	0-25	1 uid. fragment of metal 2 small nails 4 majolica sherds - Colombia Plain [1490-1650] 10 brick fragments 1 fragment of clear green glass 2 igneous rock fragments 11 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	50-75	4 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 24 igneous stones 1 uid. fragment of metal
	75-100	[negative]
	100-125	1 fragment of brown glass 4 small uid. stones
N - 1	0-25	1 metal ring 1 bone fragment 2 pieces of <i>argamasa</i> 1 piece of charcoal
	25-50	1 brick [or roof tile] fragment
	50-75	[sterile]
	75-100	1 fragment of clear glass 10 uid. small stones
O - 1	0-25	1 uid. stone 2 pieces of mortar
GG - 1	0-25	2 round nails
	25-50	[negative]
	50-75	3 brick fragments 1 fragment of uid. metal 1 piece of <i>argamasa</i>

BORING #	DEPTH [CMS]	ARTIFACTUAL DATA
JJ - 1	0-25	2 pieces of <i>argamasa</i>
	25-50	[negative]
	50-75	1 small igneous stone

SECTION G: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



[del Valle Zeno 1937]

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Field and Archive Conclusions

On the basis of historic documentation, it can be concluded that the settlement of Caparra was at one point in time composed of as many as over a thousand individuals.

The existence of more than one stone structure in the original settlement of Caparra is highly likely. Historic documentation corroborates the existence of multiple stone ruins in the abandoned area over a century later.

Based on the series of aerial photographs of the area of Caparra, historic cartographic material, the records of Engineer Rafael del Valle Zeno, and the records and site plans of don Adolfo de Hostos, the Foundation prepared the base map for this study (Fig. 4-F). The plan titled "Site Plan of Ruins of Proposed House of Juan Ponce de León: Caparra Settlement (ca. 1508)" shows the original location of the ruins and present locations of the partial reconstruction of the ruins of Caparra. The orientation of the original buildings was north-south along its longest axis. The "reconstructed" ruins are presently perpendicular to the main road in a north- northwestern orientation. The archaeological testing in the area of the original position of the ruins indicates a high probability that subsurface evidence of the original structure still remains.

Limited archaeological testing in the immediate surrounds of the 1936 ruins indicates that the area still holds a potential for yielding significant scientific information on the earliest periods of European colonization in Puerto Rico and the West Indies. Given the relatively short period of occupation of the settlement of Caparra it may be possible that the accumulation of artifactual refuse was limited, hence the unexpected low density of recovered materials in the testing phase. Nevertheless, dense activity areas containing dietary refuse and archaeological activity features should still exist in the area.

National Register Issues

The documentation presented in the present work clearly demonstrates the lack of integrity of the present walls construed to be the ruins of the stronghold of Juan Ponce de León. Both the integrity of location and that of building technology is not that which is represented on the 1984 National Register of Historic Places Nomination sheet. The 1984 Nomination identifies the present ruins as "consolidated ruins" which are "unaltered" and are located at their "original site" (see Appendix: National Register Nomination, Part 7).

Archaeological testing in the area of the Institute property indicate the minimal presence of early colonial period diagnostic artifacts in the immediate vicinity of the present ruins. The early historical character of the where the ruins presently are is one which merits consideration for National Register purposes. The present walls on the Institute property, however, fail to correlate with the actual ruins discovered in 1936. Although the present walls are believed to have been "reconstructed" from the remains found on the southern side of Highway PR-#2, there is no clear documentation as to who, when, why and how the "dismantlement" and subsequent "reconstruction" of the ruins took place.

The total destruction of the *tapia* walls in the area now housing the present walls merits serious consideration. The documented existence of original 16th century *tapia* construction exceeding four feet high in areas truly marks the 1936 discovery as highly significant. The fact that this unique historic fabric was totally destroyed after having survived for over four centuries, detracts from the potential significance of this particular site.

The Site of Caparra may be worthy of nomination as a historic site, however the present ruins identified as the remains of the stronghold of Juan Ponce de León, lack integrity and their significance, in their present state, is highly questionable.

Given the potential importance of this particular site in regards to the upcoming 500th Anniversary of the Discovery as the first European settlement in Puerto Rico, a number of key questions merit serious consideration.

Recommendations For Future Research

The present research effort has opened more questions than it has answered, however, that is the nature of scientific inquiry. Although it is not the design of this present work to develop a detailed set of research questions for further work, some key avenues of investigation need mentioning.

The ruins identified in the late 19th century as those of Caparra along the old Guaynabo road existed as late as the 1950's. The 400th anniversary of Juan Ponce de León was celebrated there. investigation. This area merits archaeological investigation.

The immediate area of the 1936 ruins should be excavated using highly-controlled large-exposure areas to reveal structural and activity features associated with the 16th century settlement.

The collections of the 1937 excavations should undergo curation and consolidation to insure the future integrity of the documentation of those investigations. One can not anticipate the research potential of these materials should future investigations be carried out on the settlement of Caparra.

Projection of site parameters for the 16th century settlement should be developed using historic sources. These projections could serve as baseline data for an intensive field program.

The historical accounts of the location of Caparra within the bay area need to be correlated with the possible changes in distances resulting from mangrove development and/or attrition over a 500 year period. Ecological and topographical assessments need to be correlated with the historical and archaeological data to date and incorporated into any future archaeological investigations.

The smelting of gold, dietary refuse, structural remains, topographic alterations (i.e plazas) and daily activities associated with a population of nearly 1,000 individuals over a decade must have left more than a single ruin. It is our obligation as scientific researchers to pursue these avenues of investigation. The contact periods which provide a wealth of undocumented evidence on the interrelationships of European and New World cultures has only begun to be researched in Puerto Rico. We owe it to ourselves, if not to our future generations, to try and identify, preserve and learn from our collective history.



SECTION H: BIBLIOGRAPHY



[Alegria 1989]

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APPENDIXES



ILUSTRADO

puerto rico

le número:

ntaña bajo la
por A. Cruz
es.

do Capítulo de
a de Franklin
osevelt, por
Ludwig.

amosas excava-
de Caparra,
Paniagua
cante.

ra y civilización
uis Lloréns
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e París,
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ad, por E. Avilés
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Londres
"Garding House"
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de Castro, por
io Astol.

o "policiaco.—
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También Pietranto-
li, Señorita Puerto
rico de 1937, en las
excavaciones de Ca-
parra a que se refle-
e el reportaje que
e publica en este
mismo número.
(Foto. Scott,
P. R. N. S.)

XXVII

no 1454

enero de 1938.



LAS FAMOSAS EXCAVACIONES

Curiosos objetos encontrados enire las ruinas de la primitiva capital de Puerto Rico. Una visita en compañía del Historiador Oficial Sr. de Hostos.

CONTINUAN las excavaciones de Caparra con resultados halagadores. Aún cuando todavía no se puede asegurar de un modo definitivo que las ruinas descubiertas sean las auténticas de la antigua casa del Adelantado Juan Ponce de León, hay indicios de evidencia, que arrojarán luz definitiva para determinar la validez del maravilloso hallazgo. Lo que sí ha motivado el asombro de los investigadores e historiadores del país es la numerosa cantidad de objetos raros encontrados después de cuatro siglos de olvido. Si tales trabajos hubiesen empezado mucho antes, sin duda alguna que se hubieran obtenido trozos de objetos muy interesantes para enriquecer nuestro museo histórico y dar ocasión a estudios que facilitarían la explicación total de muchos aspectos

que en la actualidad por falta de datos retardan la investigación y por consiguiente la hacen más laboriosa.

Una de estas mañanas frescas de invierno tuvimos la grata oportunidad de trasladarnos en compañía del Historiador Oficial de Puerto Rico señor Adolfo de Hostos, al sitio en que se viene realizando las famosas excavaciones. A pesar de la lluvia mañanera, el sol calentaba algo y el tiempo era propicio para admirar la vetustez centenaria de aquellas piedras, que hablan como trozos de lenguas vivas sobre nuestro génesis histórico. Tales reliquias son el último despojo de una colonización frustrada, de lo que bien pudo ser la capital de Puerto Rico, de no haberse resuelto su traslado a la Isleta en donde se encuentra actualmente emplazada.

En el kilómetro seis de la carretera que conduce de San Juan a Bayamón, detuvimos la marcha. Penetramos en una parcela de terreno debidamente empalizada en donde estaban trabajando un grupo de hombres. Hacia el lado izquierdo de la entrada levántase una enorme caseta de maderas, destinada para el archivo y las oficinas. Hacia la derecha están aún a medio descubrir las ruinas que se suponen sean de la casa de Ponce de León. Ante nuestros ojos se descubre un magnífico espectáculo. La llanura allí se extiende cual una alfombra verde cerrada hacia el norte por unos montículos rojizos. Ni la bahía, ni el caño se divisan. Por el saliente solamente entre brumosa neblina adivinase el caserío de Santurce. Por el sur pasa la carretera, bajo la cual se cree puedan prolongarse las ruinas de la antigua Caparra.

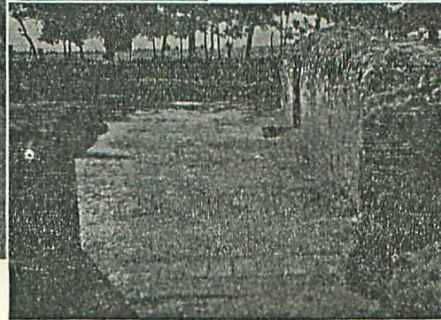
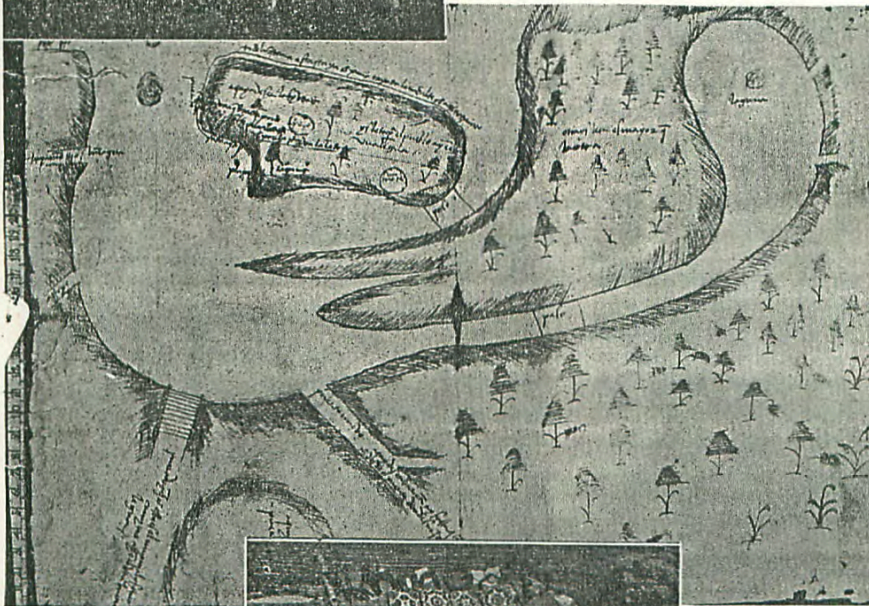
Juan Ponce de León, cuadro del pintor sueco Jameson, en Casa Blanca.

Reproducción fotográfica del famoso mapa de San Juan levantado por el Ldo. Rodrigo de Figueroa en 1519 y que se encuentra en el Archivo General de Indias, en España. Nótese el sitio en donde estaba emplazada Caparra. Dicho mapa sirvió en la información sobre el traslado de la Ciudad a la Isleta.

Objetos extraídos en las excavaciones de Caparra. Nótese los azulejos, las piedras con molduras talladas a mano y los restos de un tebrillo.

Operaciones de excavación en la fachada oeste del edificio.

Uno de los portales de la casa. Véase los ladrillos puestos a la entrada.



herraduras de hierro forjado, partes del armazón de un estribo, infinidad de ristra de clavos intiquísimos, entre los cuales aparecen unos enormes de pie y medio de largo, refuerzos de portón, así como enormes trozos de piedras con molduras y ornamentación, obra del buril diestro de algún hábil artesano del siglo XVI.

* * *

Ponce de León desembarcó por primera vez por las playas cercanas a Guayanilla el 12 de agosto de 1508 en las tierras pertenecientes al cacique Quebán. A los pocos días desatóse un terrible huracán que echó a tierra el carabelón. Los ilustres historiadores Perea, hacen constar que ésta es la primera tormenta que registran los anales de nuestra nación. Y que ni Acosta en su noticia de los huracanes que ha sufrido la Isla, ni en el tomo quinto del Boletín Histórico aparece anotada. Rehabilitado el navío, bojeó Ponce por el litoral del sur, doblando luego por el Cabo de Malapascuas hasta remontar el Cabo Piñero, de donde torció al oeste hasta llegar al remanso del puerto de San Juan.

Aseguran los historiadores, que venían con Ponce más de cincuenta personas, entre quienes se hallaban Juan González, familiarizado con la lengua de los indígenas, la cual había aprendido cuidadosamente, y los colonizadores Luis de Añasco, Francisco de Barriónuevo, Miguel de Toro y Juan Gil Calderón. No fué inmediatamente fundada Caparra. Ponce reconoció la bahía y la isleta, siguió luego al Poniente, exploró ríos, acampó cerca de un río que no se ha podido determinar, envió a la Mona por casabe, se lanzó por tierra hasta el río Toa, de allí regresó al paraje anterior, volvió a verificar expediciones por las inmediaciones; en fin, estuvo de un lado para otro hasta encontrar un lugar donde fabricó un inmenso bohío, construyó caminos y una calzada para desembarcadero probablemente en una de las desembocaduras de los pequeños ríos que van a dar a la bahía por la parte sur. De allí a media legua tierra adentro, volvió a mudarse con su gente, estableciendo definitivamente un burgo que fué la primera fundación permanente en el Nuevo Mundo, fuera de Santo Domingo.

El nuevo burgo, futura villa de Caparra, fué creciendo en caserío, conforme iban llegando nuevos habitantes. Ponce de León se dedicaría luego a fabricar su gran palacete de tapias. Es sabido por las investigaciones históricas practicadas, que junto a la casa del que ejercía el gobierno de las colonias españolas aparecen por lo regular dos importantes edificios: la casa de fundición y la Iglesia. Posiblemente estas edificaciones eran de madera en Caparra como el resto de la población. Del desarrollo, crecimiento y vicisitudes de la fundación, los hermanos Perea, en su brillante monografía histórica sobre el adelantado Juan Ponce de León, anotan copiosos datos con lujo de detalles verdaderamente asombrosos. Cuánta lucha contra una naturaleza y un clima hostil. Prematuramente las pasiones humanas habían mediado haciendo de Caparra un centro de odios y rencillas entre los dos partidos, los primeros en nuestra historia, o sean los que estaban al lado del viejo Ponce y que constituían un grueso de los habitantes y los parciales de los Cerones que a su vez eran agresivos, turnándose en el gobierno de la incipiente colonia. Unas veces gobernaba Ponce y otras Cerón, según ganaban terreno en Madrid las influencias y los derechos de uno y otro. Esta situación en parte se debía a las problemáticas interpretaciones de las capitulaciones y demás documentos entre los descendientes de Colón y los Reyes de España. Pleitos que duraron bastante y que culminaron finalmente ante el Consejo en donde se inició la causa con una petición formal del Almirante, alegando los fundamentos de los derechos que exigía y a la cual contestó el fiscal del Rey notorio que el fallo del Consejo otorgó a don Diego Colón la gobernación de todas las islas descubiertas por su glorioso padre y la administración de justicia le fué reconocida con el título de Virrey, aunque debía impartirse a nombre del Rey don Fernando y de su hija la Reina doña Juana.

* * *

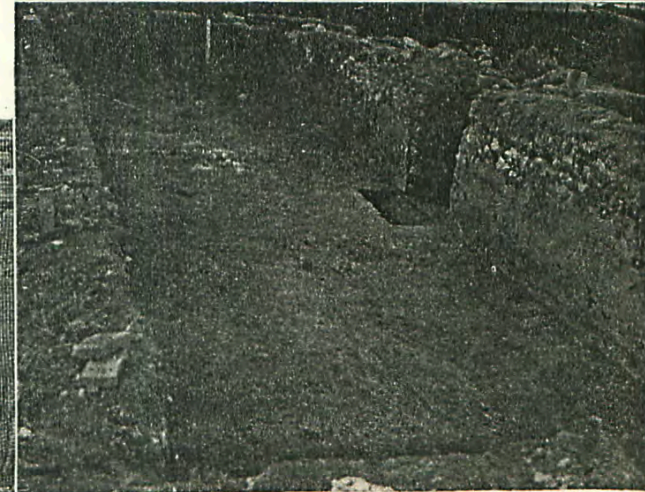
El intrépido conquistador volvió a la Española a fines de abril de 1509. Había dejado en la gobernación interina de la recién fundada comunidad a don

Juan Gil Calderón. Firmó con el Comendador Ovando nuevas capitulaciones y éste escribió al Rey para que enviase mantenimientos, modo de asegurar una sistemática colonización de Puerto Rico. Fué entonces que Ponce se trasladó de nuevo a nuestra isla y debidamente autorizado, trajo consigo a su familia, más doscientos pobladores. Llegó al recién fundado burgo navegando esta vez directamente al norte de la Isla. Gran regocijo causaría su llegada pues llevaba más gente y nuevas provisiones. Hasta ese instante no fué bautizada la fundación con el nombre de Caparra, que le había sido indicado oficialmente por Ovando. Pero poco después perdió dicho nombre, siendo libremente llamada Ciudad de Puerto Rico o simplemente San Juan.

Mucho se ha especulado con este nombre de Caparra y varios han sido los pareceres y conjeturas más o menos fundados para determinar el origen de este apelativo usado para la primera fundación permanente en nuestro suelo. Sin embargo, yo creo que entre las diversas opiniones sobre este oscuro punto de nuestros anales, los doctores Perea son los que han dado en la clave del misterio histórico. "Enigma ha sido para todos los historiadores que conocemos—dicen en su obra sobre el Adelantado—la razón cierta y origen de este nombre, el cual eligió el Comendador Ovando en recuerdo de la antigua y célebre ciudad romana de Caparra, emplazada antaño en la provincia de Lusitania, en territorio que en los tiempos de Ovando era ya español y cuyas ruinas demoraban no lejos de Brozas, ciudad natal del Gobernador de Indias, perteneciendo hoy toda la región a la provincia de Cáceres."

Ponce de León organizó entonces el gobierno formando en Caparra un Concejo Municipal, designando como su lugarteniente a don Juan Gil Calderón. Luego dedicóse a trazar la ciudad, fomentar las fabricaciones, hizo una plantación agrícola en las márgenes del Río Toa, que fué el más pingüe conuco de la isla, propulsó el reconocimiento de las riberas (Pasa a la página 67).

Caseta donde se conservan los objetos extraídos durante las excavaciones.



Una de las grandes salas de la casa expuesta de nuevo a la luz por las excavaciones.

Armarios construidos en la caseta para guardar los objetos.

do las escaleras y se encontró en la sala con su madre y su hermana.

—¡Madre!— exclamó al verla corriendo a sus brazos.

Su hermana hizo el mismo gesto desdichoso con que lo despidiera la última vez que se vieron.

—¿Y para eso vienes a verme?— preguntó José Antonio tomándolo a broma.

—No hemos venido a verte a ti,— explicó la hermana.

—¿Que no?— inquirió extrañado de su madre.

—En parte, sí,— contestó la anciana. Pero en realidad hemos venido a buscar a Daniela. Sabía que estaba muy enferma y aunque la hemos suplicado que se fuera con nosotros a descansar un poco se ha negado reiteradamente.

—¿Daniela? ¿Pero ustedes la conocen.

—Su madre le miró significativamente manifestando:

—Durante todo este tiempo ella nos ha venido ayudando suplicándonos que no te dijéramos nada. Era una ayuda que no podíamos rehusar, tan apurados estábamos. Me hablaba como una hija y creí que tú y ella... Hasta que...

—Hasta que decidiste ponerte a subasta,— completó la hermana el pensamiento. —¡Vaya con el aristócrata!

—¡Calla!— ordenó la madre. El sabrá lo que hace. Hoy nos llevamos a Daniela.

—Pero,— balbuceó José Antonio, —¿tan mala está?

—No es mucho, explicó don Fortunato. Desnutrición y nerviosidad. Ha sufrido más de la cuenta última mente.

José Antonio sintió que las lágrimas punzaban sus ojos.

—¿Dónde está ella?— preguntó.

—En su cuarto,— le contestó la madre. —Se está preparando para salir.

El pintor les volvió la espalda y marchó al cuarto de Daniela.

—¿Se puede, Dan?— preguntó con voz emocionada.

—Adelante,— contestó ella.

Cuando él entró, la joven guardaba algo en su maleta de viaje, que se dispuso a cerrar.

—¿Te vas, Dan?

Estaba más delgada, con apariencia enfermiza y doliente.

—¿Qué remedio me queda?— contestó con voz apagada. Ya no puedo escribir ni hacer nada aquí, el hotel me pesa como una maldición y me siento enferma. Aprovecho la bondad de tus padres para ir al campo a recomponerme un poco.

José Antonio se acercó a ella.

—¿Me permites que te acompañe?— preguntó sumiso.

—No creo que te convenga,— respondió Daniela sin reticencia. ¿Qué sería de tu arte y de tu gloria?

—No me importan nada.

La joven se detuvo sin volverse.

—¿Y la otra?— preguntó con voz trémula.

—No hablemos de eso,— contestó él. —Eso no existe ya.

Daniela había acabado de cerrar la maleta y él se acercó a cogerla. La tomó del brazo. ¡Cuán leve e ingrátida la sufriente criatura! Y bajaron a unirse con los otros.

—Yo también me voy,— le explicó a la madre.

—¿Y tu carrera?— preguntó la anciana.

—He llegado a la conclusión de que mi hermana está en lo cierto. Mi verdadera profesión es trabajar y salvar las tierras de mis progenitores. Ya me entretendré pintando de vez en cuando.

La hermana le sonrió con simpatías por primera vez en muchos años, pensando que acaso no fuera tan malo como parecía. El ayudó a la enferma a acomodarse en el carro y se sentó a su lado. Daniela recostó sobre su brazo la cabeza y entrecerró los ojos.

—¿Te sientes muy mal?— la preguntó solícito.

—No. Ya no,— respondió la joven. —Siento que, después de tanta lluvia, de nuevo sale el sol sobre la montaña.

Arrancó el automóvil. El la besó en los ojos.

FIN

A. CRUZ Y NIEVES.

LAS FAMOSAS EXCAVACIONES DE CAPARRA

(Continuación de la página 14)

auríferas y el beneficio de los aluviones, entró en tratos de amistad con los jefes indígenas haciendo alianza de paz y respeto, en fin, una serie de actuaciones, que desde el primer momento, le acreditan como un gran gobernante, hábil diplomático y humanitario colonizador.

Así vemos que desde su fundación, Caparra tuvo gobierno y los cargos del mismo fueron llenándose con oficiales que poco a poco iban siendo nombrados, primero por Ponce, luego por Cerón. Lo cierto es que a la fecha de la información que se hizo para estudiar la conveniencia o no del traslado de la población a la isla, las autoridades de Caparra eran las siguientes: Lcdo. Sánchez Velázquez, Justicia Mayor, D. Andrés de Haro, Tesorero y Regidor; D. Hernando de Mogollón, Regidor; D. Sancho de Aragón, Veedor, D. Diego Darze, Regidor; D. Pedro Moreno, Alcalde Ordinario de la Ciudad; D. Baltasar de Castro, Factor de Sus Altezas; D. Antonio Sedeño, Contador; todos los cuales votaron a favor del traslado en la audiencia celebrada a tal efecto, votando en contra don Juan Ponce de León quien expuso sus motivos por escrito. Fueron testigos de este importante suceso D. Pedro de Ledesma, Secretario de la Audiencia de Isla Española y D. Pedro de Cárdenas por y en representación de San Juan.

La información sobre mudar de

asiento la ciudad fué hecha por el enviado especial de Su Majestad para tal fin o sea el licenciado Rodrigo de Figueroa, quien entre otras cosas había escrito a Su Majestad Católica: *non está asentada como sería menester para el trato de los navíos que van de Castilla al puerto de la dicha cibdad; e que demás desto, el dicho pueblo non es bien sano, a cabsa destar muy ahogado e sombrio, e thiene otros ynconvenientes por donde se debería mudar a otra parte si tal aparexo e asiento se fallase*.

El Lcdo. Figueroa, exploró la isla y luego cruzó la bahía para internarse en Caparra en donde vivió poco más de doce días. Informó además que al llegar a dicha ciudad toda la gente estaba enferma *"encontró a todos amarillos, muchos llenos de llagas en las piernas e desta cabsa muchos con bordones e muchos con flaqueza, cara en los mantenimientos e doblado el precio más que lo que vale en la Española"*.

El 13 de julio 1519, tuvo efecto la primera sesión de la Junta de Información sobre el traslado de la primitiva Caparra al sitio que hoy ocupa la capital de nuestro país. Larga información que consta con todos los pareceres, declaraciones juradas y demás documentos oficiales del expediente, recopilados en el tomo tercero del Boletín Histórico, editado por el historiador Coll y Toste.

Al fin, decidido el traslado, conforme en ello todas las autoridades y en vista de la tenacidad del viejo don Juan Ponce de León, que no se resignaba a abandonar el primitivo hogar, se acordó la siguiente cláusula conciliadora: *"E porquel Adelantado Xean Ponce de León a gastado mucho en facer e edyficar una casa de piedra que thiene fecha en la dicha cibdad, permytimos que dicho Adelantado pueda vivir en la dicha su casa todo el tiempo que quysiere, con tanto quel solar o solares que le fueren dados en la dicha nueva cibdad los thenga cercados e thenga en ellos en casa poblada, e acuda e venga todas las veces que fuera menester a Cabildo, e preveer todo lo demás que se ofreciere, como Capitán Xeneral e reidor qués de la dicha ysla e cibdad"*.

¡Oh, tenacidad del más bizarro y romántico de los conquistadores enamorado de la perenne juventud! ¡Qué sentido de permanencia, de firmeza, de perduración! ¡Qué anhelos de inmortalidad trascendente! Vino a fundar, no para dar un soplo de vida limitada y fugar a un burgo inconsistente, sino que a colonizar para siempre. Bajo esos dos símbolos, el del tenaz apego al terruño y al del amor a la eterna juventud, nace esta comunidad puertorriqueña, que luego de traducir esos signos en el formidable poder de resistencia física y espiritual frente a todas las luchas

DESPABILE LA BILIS DE SU HIGADO...

Sin usar calomel—y saltará de su cama sintiéndose "como un cañón"

El hígado debe derramar todos los días en su estómago un litro de jugo biliar. Si ese jugo biliar no corre libremente no se digieren los alimentos. Se pudren en el vientre. Los gases hinchan el estómago. Se pone usted estreñido. Se siente todo envenenado, amargado y deprimido. La vida es un martirio.

Salen, acides minerales, laxantes o purgantes fuertes no valen la pena. Una mera evacuación del vientre no tocará la causa. Nada hay mejor que las famosas Píldoras Carters para el Hígado para acción segura. Hacen correr libremente ese litro de jugo biliar y se siente usted "como un cañón". No hacen daño, son suaves y sin embargo, son maravillosas para que el jugo biliar corra libremente. Pida las Píldoras Carters para el Hígado por su nombre. Rehusé todas las demás. Precio: \$25



PARA DORMIR PROFUNDA Y TRANQUILAMENTE

Una de las causas más comunes de insomnio es la nerviosidad. Un sueño tranquilo y natural se logra solamente cuando los NERVIOS están calmados y tranquilos. No hay motivo para padecer noche tras noche de esa tensión nerviosa y preocupaciones que desvelan. Fácilmente y sin peligro Ud. puede librarse de esa nerviosidad y de esos desvelos. Basta que tome NERVINA del Dr. Miles antes de acostarse. Le calma los nervios, relaja la tensión nerviosa y le ayuda a dormir tranquila y profundamente, de tal manera que por la mañana despierta completamente restaurada.

NERVINA del Dr. Miles es un sedativo eficaz e inofensivo que ha ayudado a millones de personas a obtener un pronto alivio. A Ud. también le convendrá. Enérgica.

De venta en todas las farmacias

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del DR. MILES

El Origen del Asma

Combatido en 3 Minutos

Disolviendo y expulsando la mucosidad o flema que produce el ahogo y asfixia en los ataques de asma, la fórmula de un médico, conocida con el nombre de Mendaco, elimina la causa de su angustia. Nada que inhalar, nada de narcóticos e inyecciones. No tiene ningún sabor y empieza a obrar en 3 minutos. Duerma profundamente esta noche pronto se sentirá bien, años más joven y más fuerte, y podrá comer de todo. Se garantiza completa satisfacción o se le devuelve su costo. Si no encuentra Mendaco en la botica haga que lo pidan para Ud. La garantía lo protege.

MARTINEZ CARRERAS & CO.
Box 960 — San Juan.

materiales y morales de su aciaga historia y además en ese lozano renacer de sus profusas generaciones. ¡Puerto Rico, tú fuiste engendrado con sangre y espíritu de eternidad!

J. PANIAGUA SERRACANTE
Invierno de 1937.



OFICINA DEL GOBERNADOR
OFICINA ESTATAL DE PRESERVACION HISTORICA
LA FORTALEZA
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO 00901

*Exp.
Ruinas de
Caparra*

16 de marzo de 1984

Hon. Alejandro Cruz Jr.
Alcalde
Municipio de Guaynabo
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico 00657

Estimado señor Alcalde:

Adjunto copia del último listado del Registro Nacional de Lugares Históricos, donde se incluye el recurso cultural conocido como:

Ruinas de Caparra, Guaynabo

Todos los recursos incluidos en el mencionado Registro tienen derecho, de existir los fondos y de así solicitarse, a recibir fondos federales para su restauración.

Muy sinceramente,

Arleen Pabón de Rocafort

Dra. Arleen Pabón de Rocafort
Oficial Estatal de Preservación
Histórica

Anejo

blg

NEW MEXICO, Eddy County, Artesia, Mauldin-Hall House (Artificial Stone Houses of Artesia TR), 501 S. Roselawn Ave. (03/02/84)
 NEW MEXICO, Eddy County, Artesia, Robert, Sallie Chisum, House (Artificial Stone Houses of Artesia TR), 801 W. Texas St. (03/02/84)
 NEW MEXICO, Eddy County, Artesia, Ross, Dr. Robert M., House (Artificial Stone Houses of Artesia TR), 1002 S. Roselawn Ave. (03/02/84)
 NEW MEXICO, Rio Arriba County, Dulce, Jicarilla Apache Historic District, Main St., NM 17, Apache, Keliiaa, and Sand Hill Drs. (03/01/84)

NORTH CAROLINA, Gates County, Gatesville vicinity, Roberts-Carter House, off NC 37 (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Guilford County, Greensboro, Revolution Cotton Mills, Roughly bounded by Southern RR; N. Buffalo Creek, Yanceyville and 9th Sts. (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Jackson County, Dillsboro, Mount Beulah Hotel (Jarrett Springs Hotel), US 23 and 44 (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, Carey, Philip, Building, 301 E. 7th St. (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, Charlotte Supply Company Building, 500 S. Mint St. (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, Merchants and Farmers National Bank Building, 123 E. Trade St. (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Mecklenburg County, Huntersville vicinity, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, SR 2004 (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Person County, Roxboro, Roxboro Commercial Historic District, Roughly bounded by Courthouse Sq., Court, Abbitt, Reams, Depot, N. and S. Main Sts. (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Sampson County, Newton Grove vicinity, Williams, Isaac, House, NC 55 (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Stanly County, Hardaway Site (31 St 4), (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Wake County, Cary vicinity, Jones, Nancy, House, NC 54 (03/01/84)
 NORTH CAROLINA, Wayne County, Goldsboro, Lee, Harry Fitzhugh, House, 310 W. Walnut St. (03/01/84)

OHIO, Champaign County, Urbana, Urbana Monument Square Historic District, Roughly bounded by Market, Walnut, Church, and Locust Sts. (03/01/84)
 OHIO, Darke County, Greenville, Greenville South Broadway Commercial District, Roughly S. Broadway from Main to Washington and Martin Sts. (03/01/84)
 OHIO, Lucas County, Maumee, Maumee Uptown Historic District, Conant, Wayne and Dudley Sts. (03/01/84)
 OHIO, Wayne County, Wooster, Walnut Street School, 237 S. Walnut St. (03/01/84)
 OHIO, Wood County, Wayne, Graham, William, House, 7056 Jerry City Rd. (03/01/84)

PENNSYLVANIA, Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, Houses at 838—862 Brightridge Street, 838—862 Brightridge St. (03/01/84)
 PENNSYLVANIA, Greene County, Waynesburg Borough, Waynesburg Historic District, Roughly bounded by Second Alley, Cherry Ave., East and Bowlby Sts. (03/01/84)

★PUERTO RICO, San Juan County, Guaynabo, Caparra, PR 2 (02/28/84)

TENNESSEE, Knox County, Knoxville, McCammon, Samuel, House (James White's House Site), 1715 Riverside Dr. (03/01/84)

TEXAS, Harris County, Houston, Temple Beth Israel, 3517 Austin St. (03/01/84)
 TEXAS, Tarrant County, Fort Worth, Bryce, William J., House (Fairview), 4900 Bryce Ave. (03/01/84)

VIRGINIA, Fredericksburg (Independent City), Presbyterian Church, SW of Princess Anne and George Sts. (03/01/84)

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections**1. Name**

historic Caparra

and or common Ruinas de Caparra

2. Location

street & number State Road #2 Km.6.32

not for publication

city, town Guaynabo

☒ vicinity of Guaynabo

state Puerto Rico

code 72

county San Juan

code 0450

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
☐ district	☒ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture	☒ museum
☐ building(s)	☐ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial	☐ park
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational	☐ private residence
☒ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment	☐ religious
☐ object	☐ in process	☐ yes: restricted	☐ government	☐ scientific
	☐ being considered	☒ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial	☐ transportation
	N/A	☐ no	☐ military	☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

street & number 98 Norzagaray Street

city, town San Juan

vicinity of

state Puerto Rico 00905

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds

street & number Guaynabo City Hall

city, town Guaynabo

state Puerto Rico

6. Representation in Existing Surveystitle Inventario de Monumentos Históricos has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1977

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Institute of Puerto Rican Culture

city, town San Juan

state Puerto Rico 00905

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☒ unaltered	☒ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☒ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		
☐ consolidated ruins			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Caparra, Puerto Rico's first capital, was founded between 1508 and 1509 by Juan Ponce de León, who chose a naturally well-ventilated site at the outskirts of the Bay of San Juan. The site, had other advantages as well, including physical protection in the form of low mountains in the rear, good natural drainage and an adjacent water supply. It was also quite close to areas that could later be used for both farming and mining.

The first formal structure built at Caparra was the "Casa de Tapias". "Tapias" was a way of construction using horizontal bands bearing that name which is still employed in some parts of Europe. This method allows us to determine the height of the building, provided we know how many "tapias" were used, for they were usually about three feet high. The structure was relatively small in size (approximately 2,960 square feet). There were battlements incorporated into the design and the house was provided with means of self-defense. A low wall was placed in front of the door for protection.

By 1509 a second house, the "Casa de Piedra" or stone house, was built as an annex. This building was a larger and more impressive edifice. The final complex was designed to be a unified whole. Tiles were brought from Seville and arranged on the facade in interesting motif. It is believed that a patio was enclosed in the eastern part.

In 1512 a chapel was built close to the complex. It had a rubble base, its walls and roof were probably built from wood and straw which were the basic building material for the construction of the settler's homes. The simple chapel was Puerto Rico's first cathedral.

Caparra was abandoned between 1519 and 1521 due mainly because settlers were not convinced that the site chosen was the best location for the capital of the new island. Protection against indian attacks was inadequate and for another, the difficulties of crossing the mangrove area on the way to and from the bay had not been reduced.

In 1936 Don Adolfo de Hostos, then official historian of Puerto Rico, undertook the archeological excavation of the site and after completing his painstaking and careful study, proved that the remains of mounds of stone were indeed of the old Caparra capital. The houses, unfortunately, could not be excavated completely for a large portion of the construction lay buried under State Road #2.

In 1958 the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture undertook additional excavations and was entrusted the preservation and conservation of the ruins. The foundations of the ruins were consolidated and, in 1964, a small museum was built where ceramic, metal, glass and other objects discovered in the course of the excavations are kept.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400-1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☒ 1500-1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☐ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social
☐ 1700-1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☐ 1800-1899	☐ commerce	☒ exploration settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☐ 1900-	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1508, 1509, 1512 Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"La Ciudad de Puerto Rico", as the island's first capital was called, was founded between 1508 and 1509 by Juan Ponce de León, Puerto Rico's first governor, in what is now Caparra. It was the second settlement that Ponce de León had established in the New World, for he had already founded the Salvaleón del Higüey settlement in neighboring Santo Domingo. Ponce, following a long urban tradition stemming all the way to Hippodamus's urban planning for the city of Miletus in about 466 B.C., chose a naturally well-ventilated site.

The site, although well-ventilated and excellent located, lacked an important element, namely, direct and easy access from the bay, a vital umbilical cord for any settlement in those days. The most important access to the bay lay along the mangrove region of the nearby area, which formed a formidable, impenetrable barrier. The settlers had to pass through this uncomfortable and dangerous area on the way to and from the bay. Due to this unsuitable condition, Caparra was probably doomed from the start.

From the beginning the city of Puerto Rico was also called Caparra or Capera. This second name was reportedly given to it by Fray Nicolás de Ovando in honor of his hometown, Roman-founded Capera (near modern Cáceres), in Spain.

The first formal edifice built at Caparra was the "Casa de Tapias", a way of construction using horizontal bands bearing that name. This method, still used in some parts of Europe, allows us to determine the height of a building (see Item No. 7 for description). By 1509, a second house, the "Casa de Piedra" or stone house, was built as an annex. As the building was to be physically and politically linked to the Spanish Kingdom, the monumental aspect of the structure was enhanced by decoration. In 1512 a chapel was built close to the complex that was to be Puerto Rico's first cathedral.

Ponce's ambition must have been to establish a center that would eventually grow into a full-fledged city with the essential urban components. In all likelihood, the city was to follow the regulations established by the royal crown closely and by 1512 a number of important public and administrative services were offered by the authorities. As a result of this desire to expand into a proper urban settlement, and in part due to an increase in the number of settlers from 175 in 1509 to 320 in 1512, a chapel was built close to the complex.

By 1518, however, the development of the settlement came to a dead-end. Settlers were not convinced that Caparra was the best location for the capital of the new island. For one thing, protection against sudden indian attacks was inadequate and for another, the difficulties of crossing the mangrove area on the way to and from the bay had not been reduced. The settlers came down with all kinds of diseases as a result of the unsanitary conditions in the area. The group in favor of a move became quite powerful when the religious order of the Geronimos joined the appeal.

FHR-8-300 (11-78)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received	
date entered	

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Letters were sent to King Charles V and all evidence suggests that a tense situation arose from this controversy, mainly because Ponce and some settlers were in favor of staying. The group against Caparra, however, was adamant. The capital had to be moved, and they said so quite insistently to a representative of the king. As a result, it was decided that the capital would move to the site they proposed, known as the "Ysleta" (Old San Juan today). The formal abandonment of Caparra took place between the years 1519 and 1521. Although Ponce de León family built a new house on the "Ysleta", they did not totally abandon the Caparra house. In fact, Juan Ponce de León never occupy the new house, known as "Casa Blanca" for he died in 1521 as a result of the wounds he had received in Bimini, Florida on his search for the elusive fountain of youth.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. The San Juan Star; Article "Caparra a City on a Grand Scale", November 21, 1982
2. The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture 1955-1973, Dr. Ricardo Alegria

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.20 cds.

Quadrangle name San Juan

Quadrangle scale 1:20,000

UTM References

Latitude 18°-24'-26" North, Longitude 66°-06'-53" West

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification The property is bounded to the North West by property owned by various neighbors, to the South East to the San José of Villa Caparra Catholic School, to the South West by property owned by Luis Díaz de Galíndez and to the North East by property owned by Gabriel Abrahams. See enclosed Site Plan.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Armando Morales Parés- State Architect

organization State Historic Preservation Office

date January 9, 1984

street & number La Fortaleza

telephone (809)-721-3012, 721-4389

city or town San Juan

state Puerto Rico 00901

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Armando Morales Parés

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date January 9, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

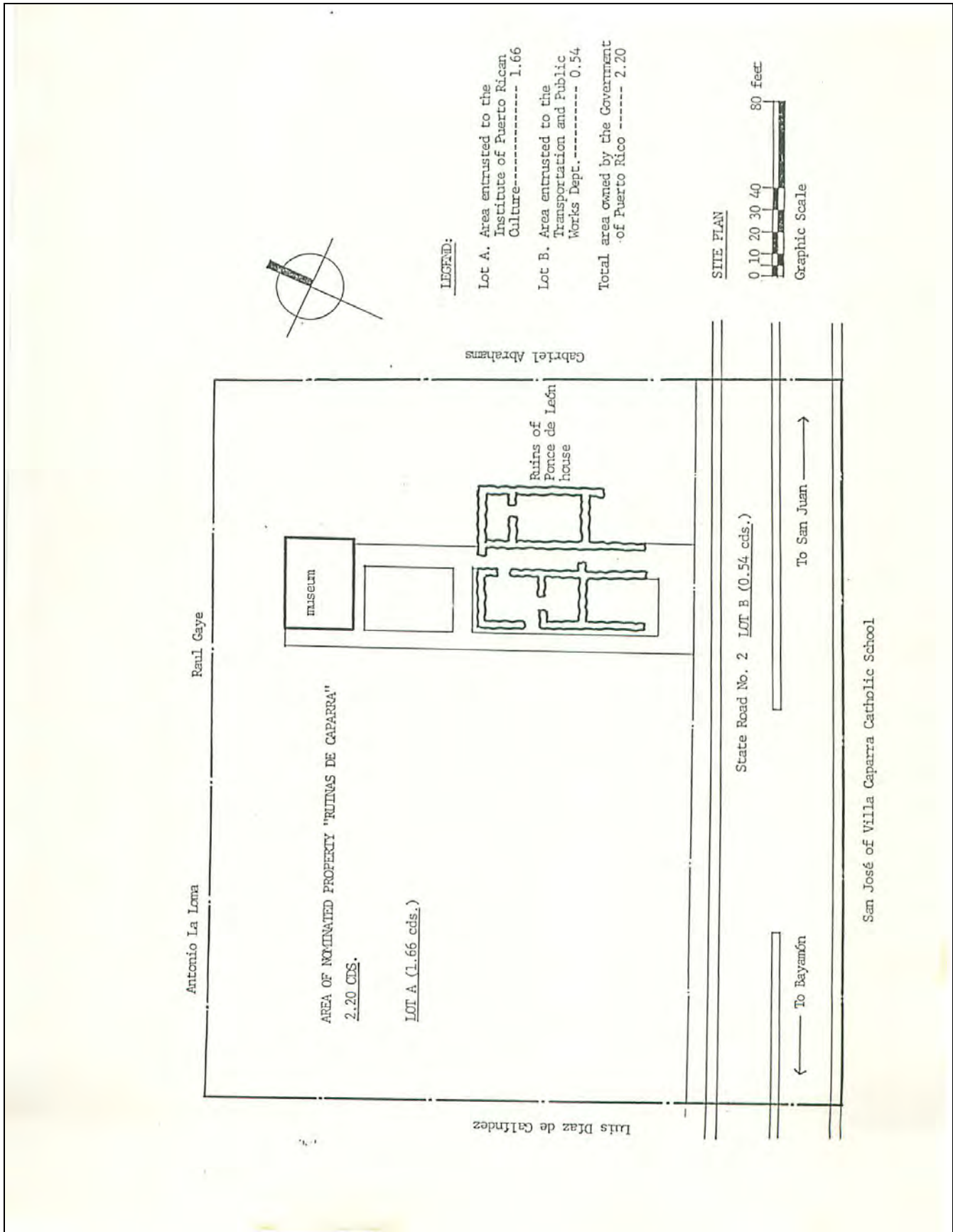
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

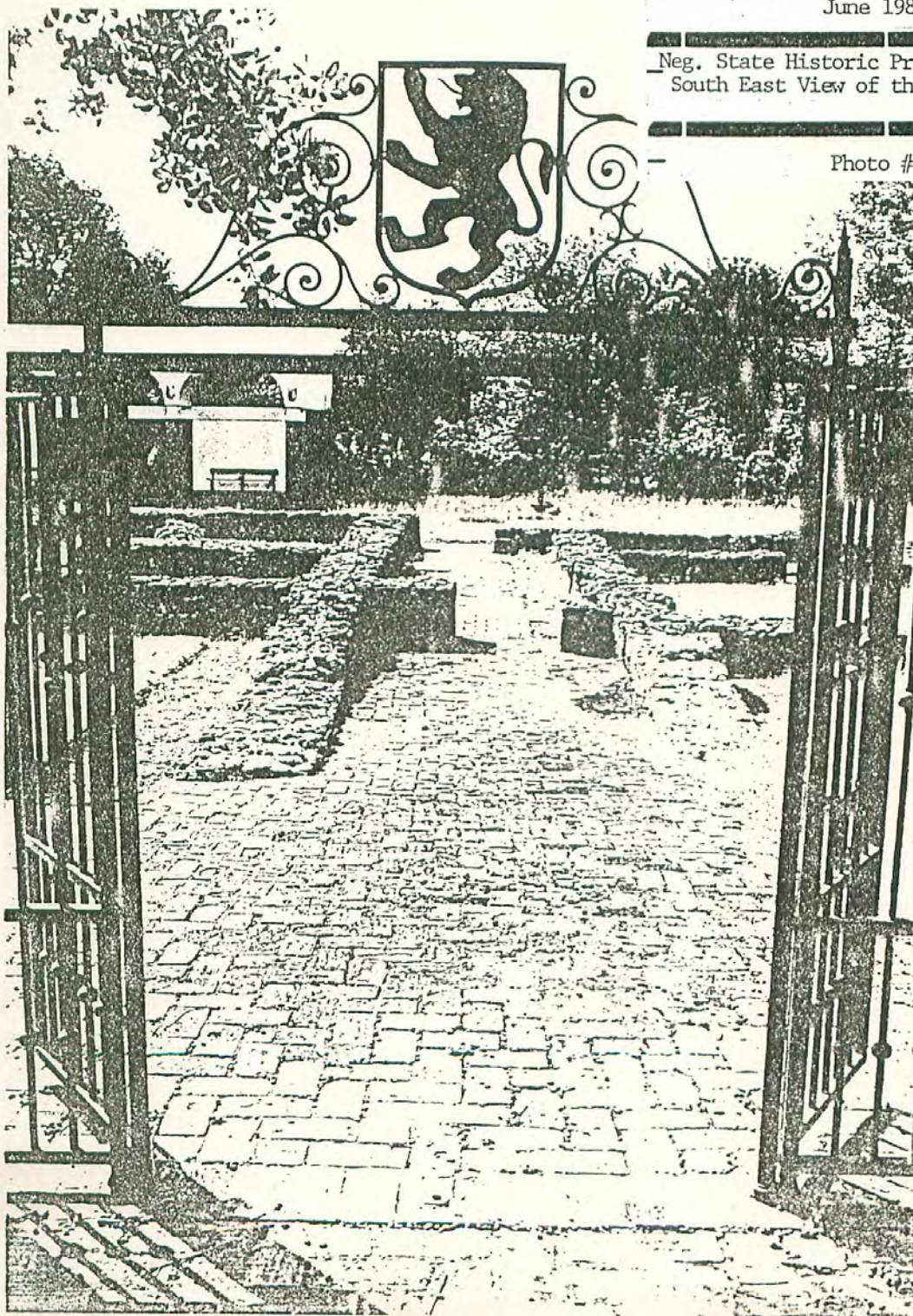


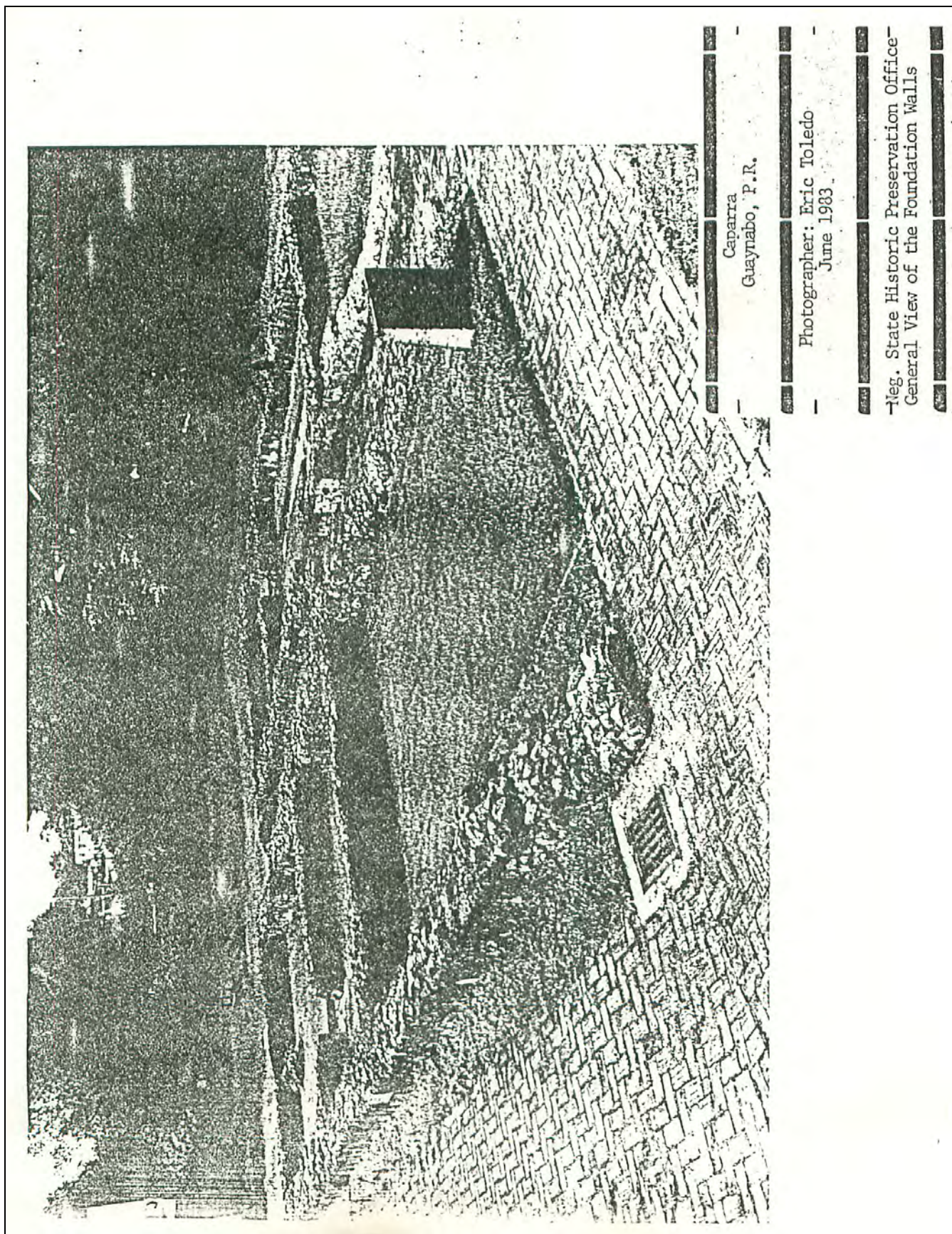
Caparra
Guaynabo, P.R.

Photographer: Eric Toledo
June 1983

Neg. State Historic Preservation Office
South East View of the Foundation Walls

Photo #1

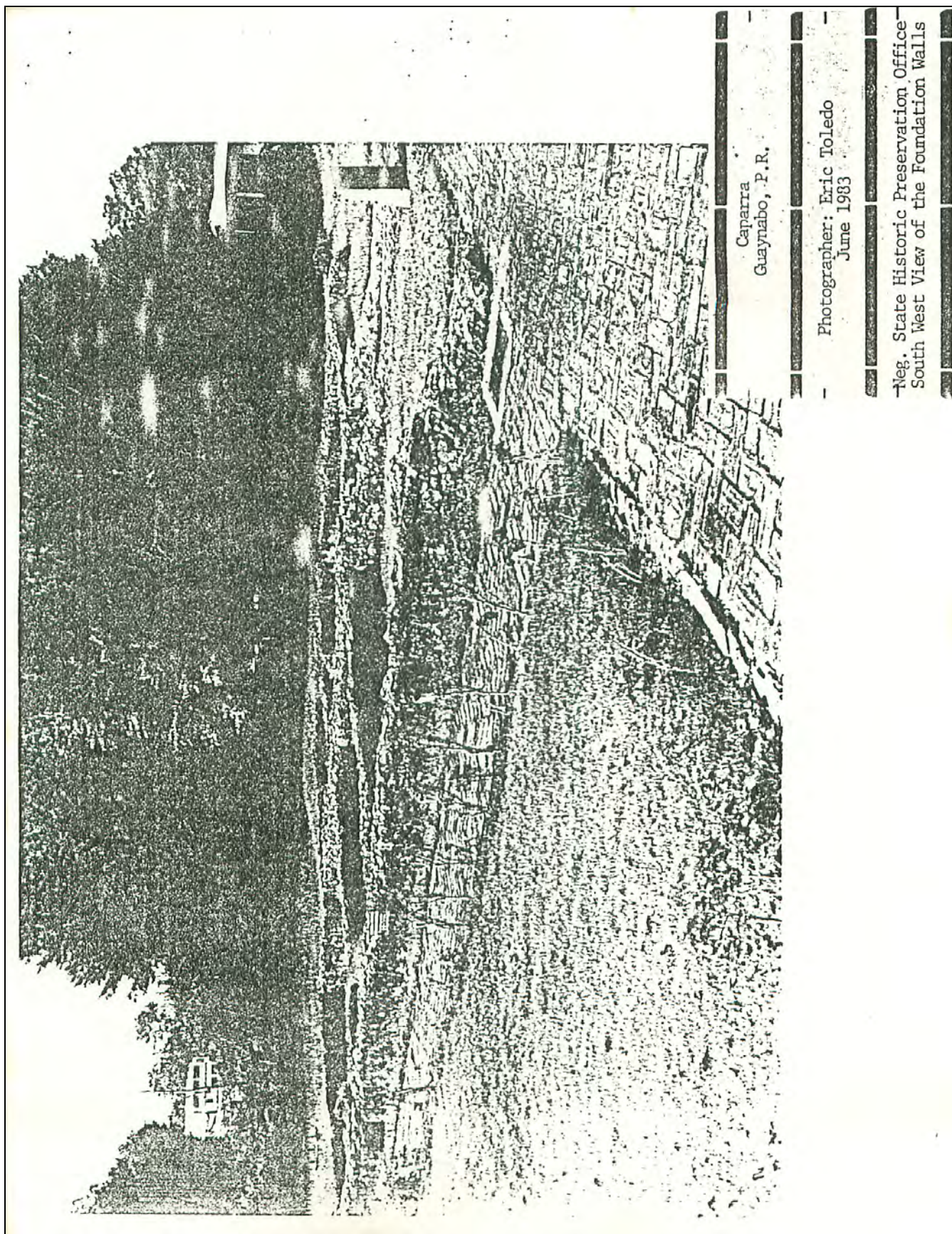




Caparra
Guaynabo, P.R.

Photographer: Eric Toledo
June 1983

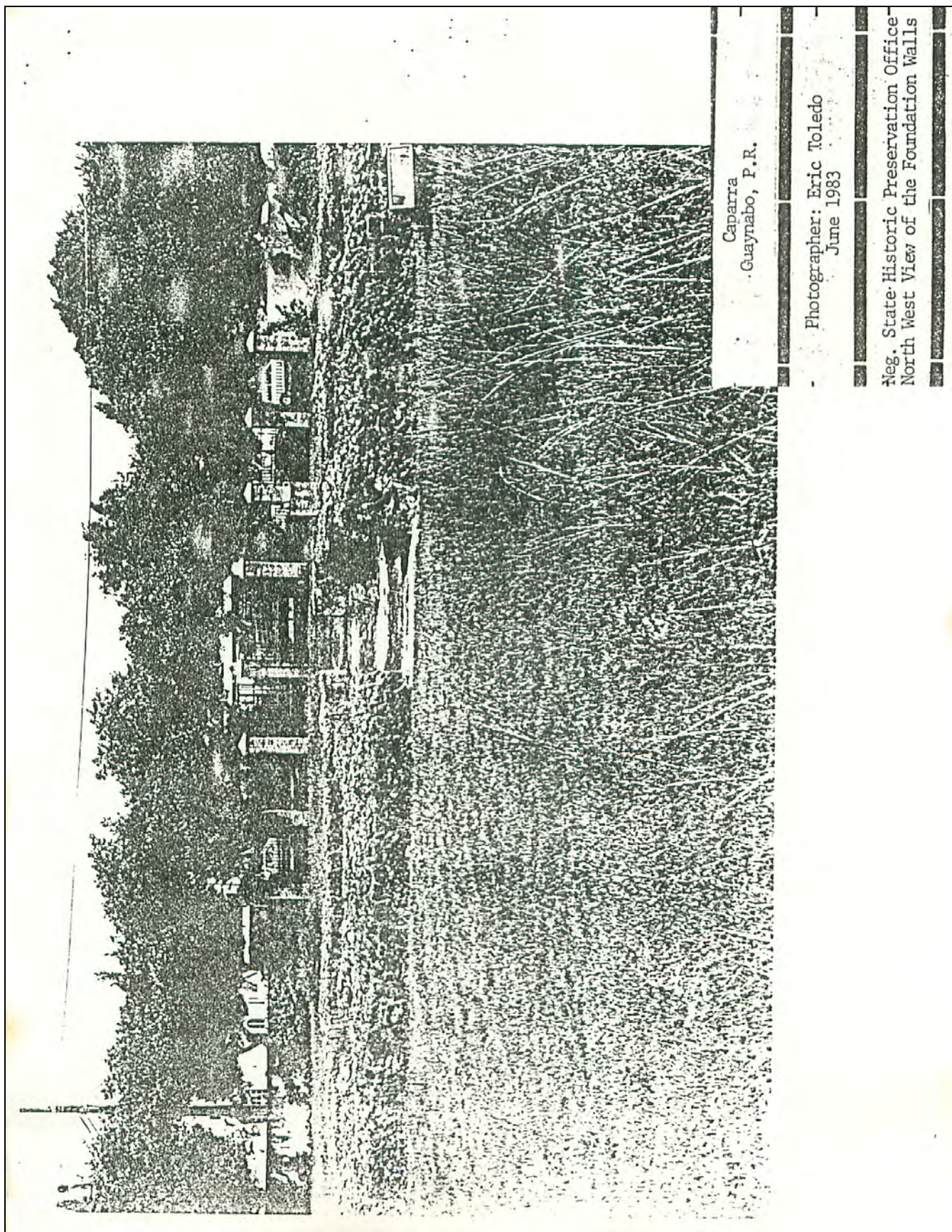
Neg. State Historic Preservation Office--
General View of the Foundation Walls

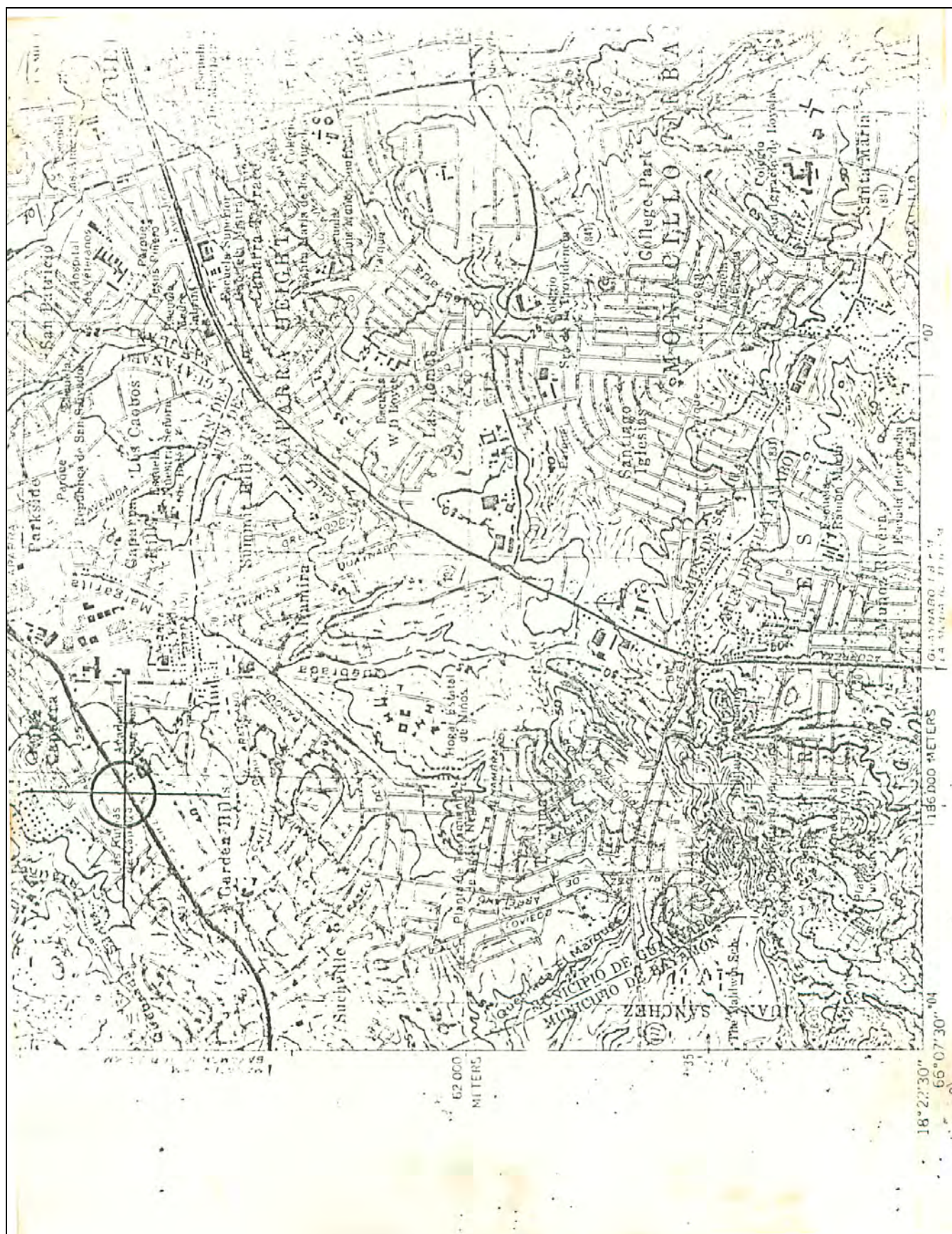


Caparra
Guaynabo, P.R.

Photographer: Eric Toledo
June 1983

Neg. State Historic Preservation Office
South West View of the Foundation Walls







INSTITUTO DE CULTURA PUERTORRIQUEÑA

ARQ. HECTOR DARIO PEREZ
DIRECTOR

DIVISION DE
PRESERVACION HISTORICA

26 de septiembre de 1983

Arleen Pabón de Rocafort, Ph.D.
Oficina Estatal Preservación Histórica
La Fortaleza
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

RE: NRN - 52
Ruinas de Caparra
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

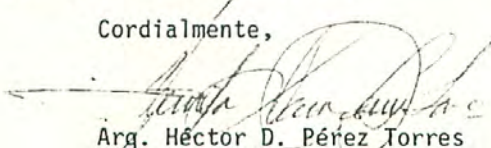
Estimada Doctora Pabón:

Estas ruinas representan los primeros ejemplos de edificación estructural producto de la más temprana influencia cultural hispánica en nuestra isla, debieron haberse incluido en el Registro Nacional de Lugares Históricos con prioridad a otros lugares y monumentos representativos de dicha cultura.

Las Ruinas de Caparra son los vestigios que acuñan el primer concepto de urbanismo europeo en Puerto Rico, tanto en su expresión física como en su face abstracta, la urbanidad, cualidad humana que conduce al forjamiento de las bases morales de nuestra cultura puertorriqueña.

Nos complace de sobremanera el saber que tan valioso monumento de la historia de Puerto Rico contempla ser incluido en el Registro Nacional. Endosamos favorablemente tan meritorio proyecto y nos ponemos nuevamente a su disposición para este o cualquier otro particular.

Cordialmente,


Arq. Héctor D. Pérez Torres
Director
Preservación Histórica

cc: Sr. Angel M. Avila Soto
Director Ejecutivo Interino

Ing. José Luis Capacete, Presidente
Junta de Directores



APARTADO 4184 • SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO 00905

TELS. 725-5788 • 724-0700 - EXT. 225, 226

Fundación
Arqueológica Antropológica e Histórica
de Puerto Rico

APARTADO 9187
 SANTURCE, PUERTO RICO 00908

OFICINA DEL PRESIDENTE

12 June 1986

Sr. Mariano Coronas
 State Historic Preservation Officer
 La Fortaleza
 San Juan de Puerto Rico 00901

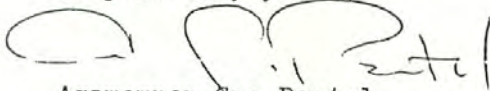
Dear Sr. Coronas:

Enclosed for your consideration is the Foundations proposal for an FY86-87 Survey and Planning Grant. The proposed project, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF THE FIRST SPANISH SETTLEMENT IN PUERTO RICO: CAPARRA, has been designed to fulfill the requirements of the Historic Preservation Fund requirements and also to provide an important event for Puerto Rico and the upcoming 500th Year Celebration.

We hope that this proposal meets with the goals of your office is favorably reviewed by you and your staff. Should you need clarification or require to discuss any part of the proposal or budget, please do not hesitate to contact us at your convenience.

The Foundation looks forward to collaborating with you on this project which we feel will have very positive results for all of Puerto Rico.

Respectfully yours,



Agamemnon Gus Pantel
 Director of Research



cc: Wilfredo A. Geigel, President

*Fundación
Arqueológica Antropológica e Histórica
de Puerto Rico*

APARTADO 9187
SANTURCE, PUERTO RICO 00908

OFICINA DEL PRESIDENTE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL, ARCHITECTURAL AND
HISTORICAL INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE FIRST SPANISH SETTLEMENT IN PUERTO RICO:
CAPARRA

submitted to
THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
LA FORTALEZA
SAN JUAN DE PUERTO RICO

for an
HPF SURVEY AND PLANNING GRANT
FY86-87

submitted by
THE FOUNDATION OF ARCHAEOLOGY,
ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORY
OF PUERTO RICO

12 JUNE 1986



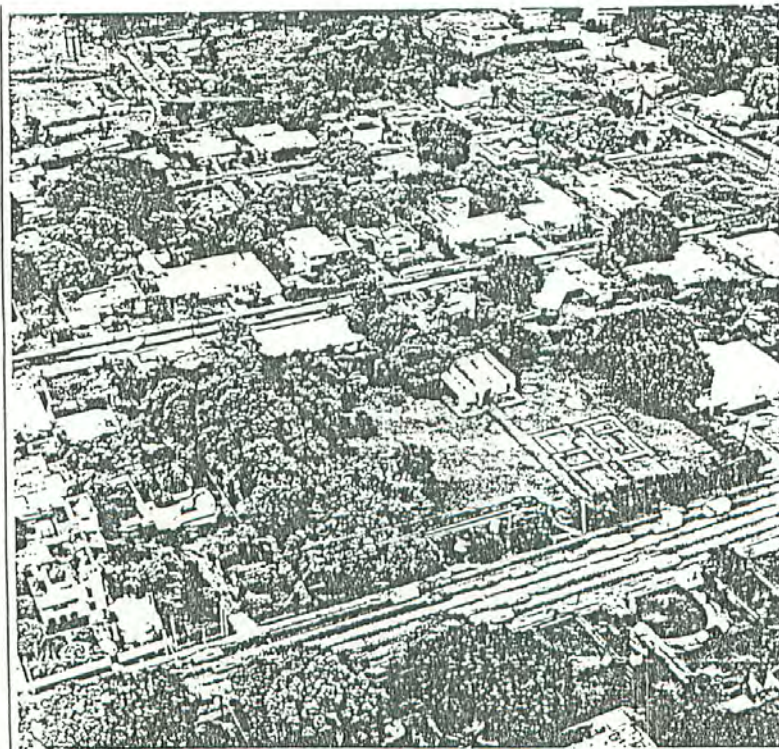
El Adelantado IUAN PONCE Descubridor de la Florida.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

This proposal is submitted at the request of the State Historic Preservation Office and has been designed to conform with the Survey and Planning procedures of the National Historic Preservation Fund, and is in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

The Scope of the project involves the archival and field investigation of the historic ruins of the 16th century settlement of Caparra settled by Juan Ponce de Leon as a base to initiate the colonization efforts for the island of Puerto Rico.

The archaeological site of the Caparra Ruins was first excavated by Adolfo de Hostos in 1936 and later by Ricardo Alegria in 1958. The design of this proposed project is focused towards the expansion of these early excavations which were limited to exposing the main ruins and stratigraphic cuts.

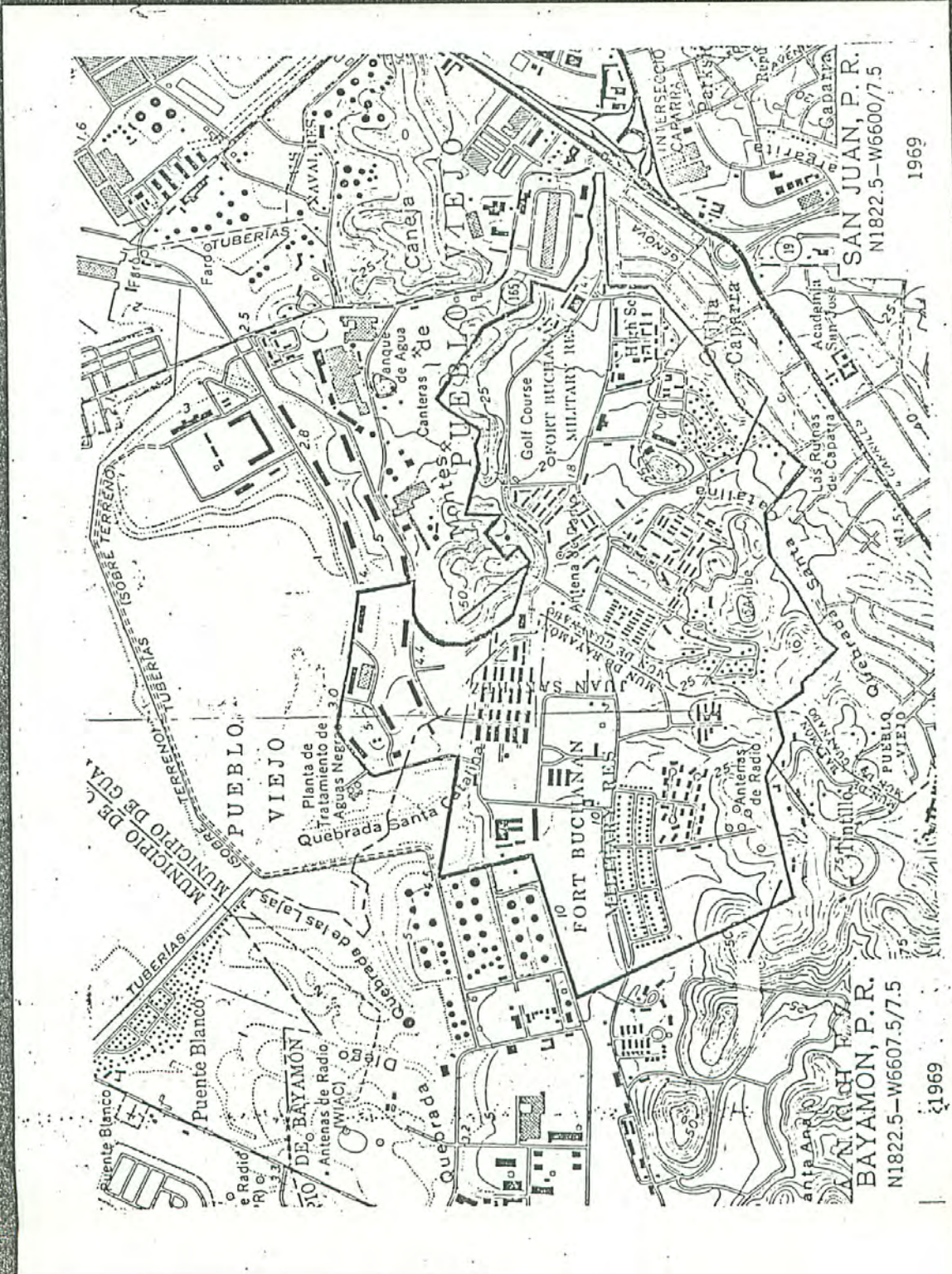


Aerial view of Caparra ruins

The proposed project will address the following specific research problems:

- 1) Locate open planned spaces such as a plaza area immediately adjacent to the present ruins, as well as any structural elements which would shed light on the specific location(s) of the other structures of the original settlement (i.e. 29 residential units [bohios], a church, storage structures, smelting house, blacksmith shop, water wells, stockyards, to enumerate a few).
- 2) Gather information leading to extrapolations on the areal dimensions of the settlement, its population density and its support areas .
- 3) Locate any evidence of the early documented roadways
 - a) linking Puerto Viejo and Caparra
 - b) linking Puerto Nuevo and Caparra
 - c) linking Caparra and Hacienda del Toa
 - d) leading to the Martin Pena bridge from Caparra
- 4) Stratigraphically collect artifactual materials allowing the establishment of correlative data for the occupational chronology of the settlement.

This includes both precolumbian and early colonial evidence which may exist within the parameters of the projected site.
- 5) Analysis of artifactual materials to determine the existence of cultural diffusion of New World and Old World traits which may constitute the initiation of Indohispanic traditions in the Caribbean.
- 6) Place Caparra within an historical context of the Caribbean urban development of the 16th century, particularly with reference to the fifteen urban settlements of Hispaniola which preceded the founding of Caparra itself (including the recent works of the University of Florida in Puerto Real and the Museo del Hombre Dominicano in La Isabela and Concepcion de la Vega).



Two basic research teams will be organized to undertake this phase. One team will consist of an historic architect with extensive academic training in historic documentation and field experience, and an urban planning historian with extensive historic training and accomplished research who will work in coordination with the Principal Investigator/Archaeologist.

The second team will be comprised of a principal investigator with extensive archaeological experience in both historical and precolumbian research, and field archaeologists with historical and precolumbian training and extensive field experience.

METHODOLOGY:

Archival research will be carried out in the archives of the Archivo General de Puerto Rico, the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and other primary and secondary resources. This phase will also include the incorporation of existing research on Caparra and related areas in terms of early urban development in the Americas and other factors specific to the settlement of Caparra itself. The results of this phase, as well as the collateral architectural research results will be incorporated into the archaeological excavation plan.

Architectural research will be carried out using bibliographical data and extant concrete examples to establish any similar construction patterns typical to the early colonization periods in the Spanish Caribbean which will aid in the identification of the Caparra settlement, its layout and settlement extension.

Archaeological subsurface excavations will be carried out using manual methods for establishment of artifactual and feature elements in a stratigraphic context. The extent and location of the excavations themselves will be contingent upon the results of the archival and architectural investigations. It is anticipated, however, that the extent of the excavations will involve the exposure of horizontal areas adequate to ascertain the data necessary to fulfill the research goals. The encounter of dense and/or deep deposits will require adjustment of the excavation parameters within the limits of the available budget and time for this

particular project. The field time can be shifted from laboratory time if more structural features than processable artifactual materials are found in the process of the excavations.

The areas to be excavated will be primarily confined to the property under the jurisdiction of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture primarily for two reasons: 1) this property constitutes the main core of the Caparra settlement and the primary buildings so that the amount of information here should be at a maximum and 2) the area is under governmental jurisdiction and permission to excavate should be more readily facilitated than in other areas of the site which are now in the hands of private land owners or the Catholic church. All proper authorizations and permits will be obtained prior to the actual field work and will begin immediately upon approval of the project. The coordination of the permissions will take place during the time the archival research and architectural research is being effected.

Once the project proceeds, all efforts will be made to obtain excavation access to properties adjoining the Caparra ruins (eg. adjoining private residences on both sides of the highway #2 as well as the lands under the ownership of the Academia San Jose). The excavation of these other property areas will be limited to test excavations primarily oriented towards the establishment of horizontal site parameters and stratigraphic cultural deposition where possible.

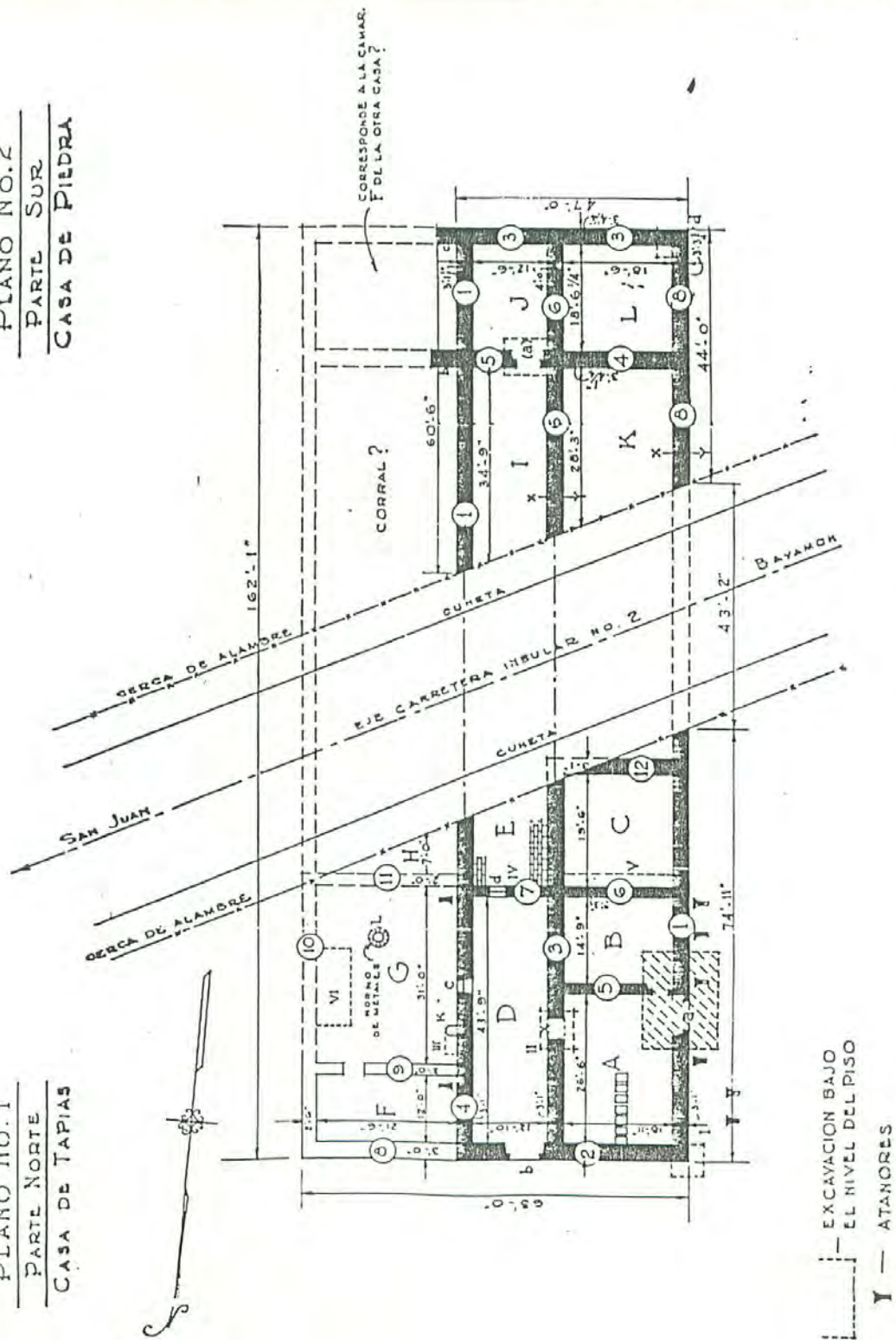
All excavated material will be screened through wire mesh standards (1/4", 1/8", &/or 1/16") depending on site conditions and deposition. All excavation will be done by hand with the exception of soil augers in those areas to be utilized for determination of horizontal site parameters.

Excavated materials will be properly field bagged and identified as to provenience and will be subsequently processed and analyzed in the laboratory phase.

Close coordination and on-site consultation will be carried out by the urban planning historian and historic architect with the PI/archaeologist during the field excavations.

PLANO NO.2
PARTE SUR
CASA DE PIEDRA

PLANO NO.1
PARTE NORTE
CASA DE TAPIAS



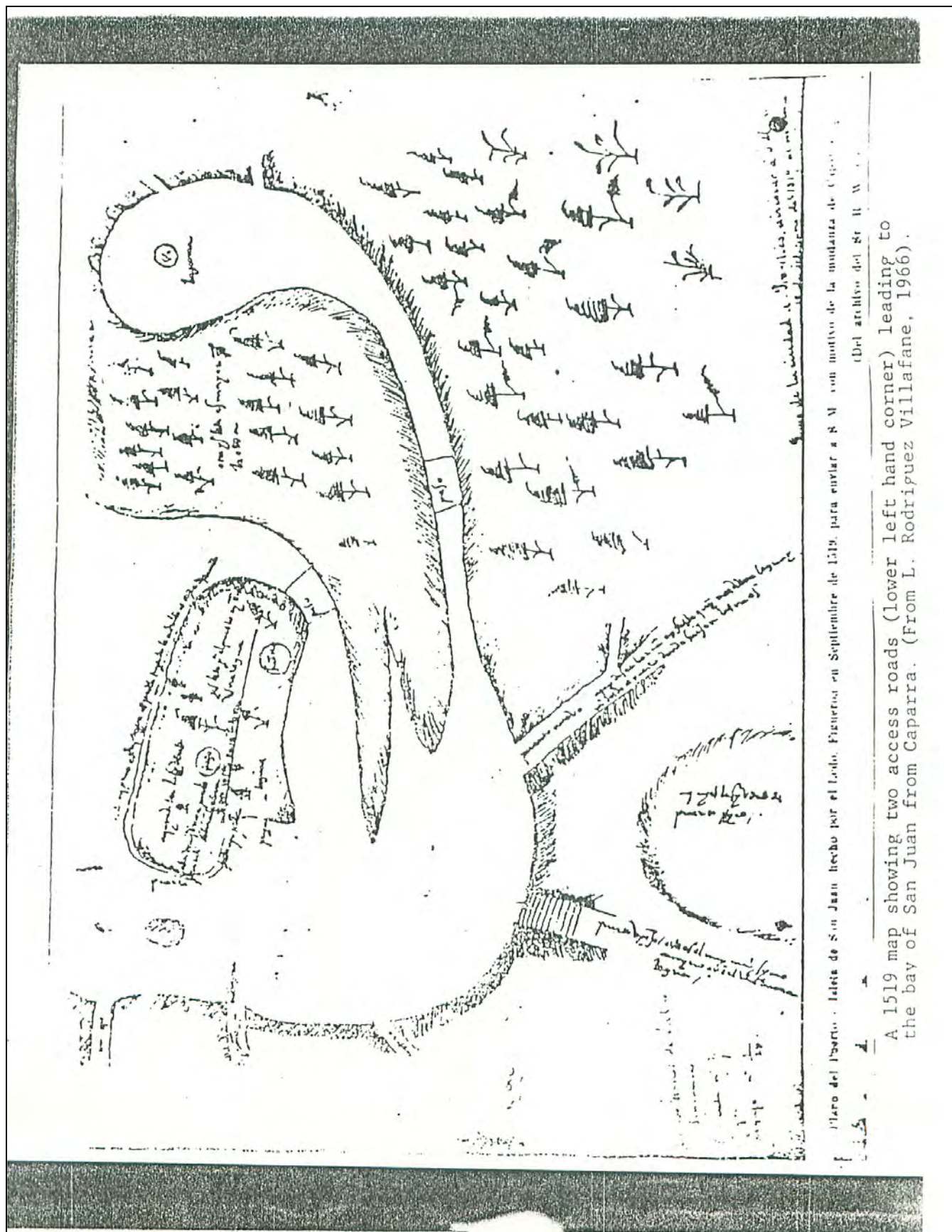
Map of the Caparra excavations done by De Hostos. (De Hostos, 1938).

ANTICIPATED RESULTS:

It is anticipated that the information obtained through this project will allow a greater understanding of the early urbanization processes essential to the Spanish colonization of Puerto Rico and similar frontier areas in the Caribbean archipelago.

This work will also constitute the first major examination of the Caparra ruins and the immediate surrounding area in nearly three decades. With new historical evidence from other sites in the early colonization of the Caribbean, the opportunity to better document the first Spanish Puerto Rican settlement becomes more viable.

The importance of the realization of this project lies not only in its local application to the cultural history of the island but plays a much broader role in the conceptual applications of the Spanish empire in the New World. With the eminent celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Discovery of the New World by the Europeans the geographical importance of this major archaeological site is greatly increased. Furthermore, it represents a major historical moment in the development of the island of Puerto Rico and its present cultural traditions.



PERSONNEL:

All personnel to be used in this project meet or exceed the federal standards established in 36 CFR for professionals in archaeology, history and architecture.

Researchers:

Principal Investigator/ Archaeologist	Agamemnon Gus Pantel
Urban Planner/Historian	Anibal Sepulveda
Historic Architect	Beatriz del Cueto de Pantel
Field Archaeologists*	Antonio Ramos Ramirez Andres Principe

[* alternatives:
Ricarda Larotonda
Juan Rodriguez
Marisol Melendez]

Vitae of key personnel included.



ESTIMATED PROJECT SCHEDULE:

Archival background research Jan-Feb [i.e. 2 months]

Architectural research Jan- Feb [i.e. 2 months]

Field Excavations March -April [i.e. 2 months]

Laboratory Analysis May-July [i.e. 3 months]

Report preparation August-Sept [i.e. 2 months]

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT
ARCHIVAL	XXXXXXXXXX		X	X				XXX	
ARCHITECTURE	XXXXXXXXXX		X	X				XXX	
ARCHAEOLOGY			XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX						
LABORATORY					XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX				
REPORT								XXXXXXXXXX	

ARCHIVAL

ARCHITECTURE

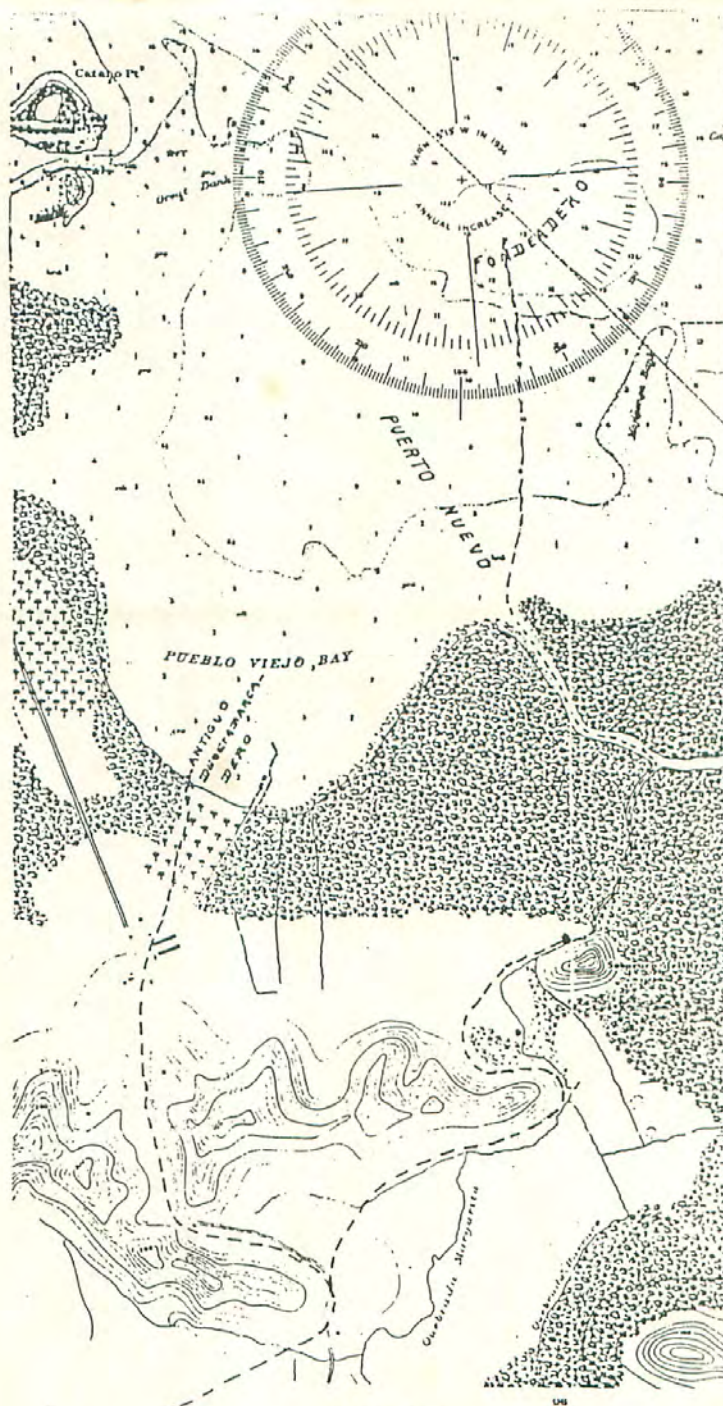
ARCHAEOLOGY

LABORATORY

REPORT

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATIONS:

The site of "Ruinas de Caparra" has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places since February of 1984. No further nominations are anticipated for this project, however, the documentation level of this National Register site will be substantively incremented.



PLANO No. 3

Posible localización de los caminos (Indicados por líneas de punto) que conducían desde la bahía de San Juan a la villa de Caparra. El camino más corto, desde el antiguo desembarcadero hasta la villa, tenía un poco más de media legua de extensión. El del Puerto Nuevo llegaba hasta la orilla de la zona de manglares, en las cercanías del Seboruco del Rey, desde cuyo punto se hacía el transporte hasta la bahía por un caño, afluente del río de Puerto Nuevo.

Escala: 100 yardas = 9 milímetros
(Una legua española es igual a 3,075 52 yardas.)

Map showing possible location of routes from San Juan Bay to Caparra.
De Hostos, 1938: Investigaciones históricas).